

12-14-2015

Columbia Chronicle (12/14/2015)

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Don't be a dummy—
ventriloquism never
went out of style

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Emanuel apologizes,
protesters demand
resignation

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Dec.
14
2015

» Courtesy ALEXIS ELLERS '08



NFL Draft punts graduation back to The Chicago Theatre

» MEGAN BENNETT
CAMPUS EDITOR

A “DOMINO EFFECT” of scheduling issues stemming from the return of the NFL Draft to Chicago next spring is causing Columbia to reverse field and send its 2016 commencement ceremonies back to the Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State St., instead of Roosevelt University’s Auditorium Theater, according to Mark Kelly, vice president of Student Success.

The venue swap, which was announced to graduating students in a Dec. 9 email, will only be in

effect for this year, with subsequent commencement ceremonies to be held at the Auditorium, Kelly said. The NFL Draft’s presence in Chicago led to multiple scheduling conflicts, including issues with the Joffrey Ballet, which is scheduled to host a “Cinderella” performance at the Auditorium Theater, 50 E. Congress Parkway, during Columbia’s ceremony dates.

Kelly added that the theater took advantage of a clause that allows Roosevelt to temporarily opt out of its contract with the college if necessary. He said because of the college’s protections within

SEE COMMENCEMENT, PAGE 10

Mental health services lead to healthy students, better retention

» **KYRA SENESE**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As Columbia continues to implement the Strategic Plan and budgets are redistributed, one issue that should not go unnoticed is the college's need to continue focusing attention on providing students proper access to mental health resources.

Many new programs, as well as continuing ones, are being offered to students to de-stress and cope with mental health issues. Even the college's library hosted a "De-stress Fest," including multiple visits in December from therapy dogs to offer students a chance to destress in the midst of finals and the upcoming holidays.

Students in need of help at the college can access resources at the office of Counseling Services, located within the 731 S. Plymouth Court Building on campus. In November 2014, The Chronicle reported that Counseling Services served more than 1,000 students through more than 5,000 total appointments during the 2013–2014 academic year. At that time, students who went to the office used six of their 10 free yearly sessions on average. Campus programs and prevention efforts may sound like one more bill to pay on the college's part, but such initiatives benefit both the students and the college because students who receive adequate care are significantly more likely to graduate rather than leaving the college when they are overwhelmed by personal struggles. According to a Dec. 10 RAND Corporation news release, public college students in California exhibited improved academic performance when they had greater access to mental health services at their colleges and universities.

Researchers for RAND, a nonprofit research organization, also said the improved access to mental health resources made it more possible for 329 at-risk students to graduate.

"We know students with untreated mental health disorders do worse educationally, from lower grades to delayed graduation to dropping out," said Bradley Stein, a senior scientist for RAND and one of the study's authors. "By teaching faculty, staff and students to better identify and support those students struggling with mental health issues, and by changing the conversation about mental health on campuses,



we can get more students into the mental health treatment they need."

Columbia's Office of Institutional Effectiveness reported that the retention rates for freshmen beginning attendance in the Fall 2012 Semester and graduated in the Spring 2015 Semester was 54.7 percent, with 1,989 students at the beginning of their enrollment and 1,088 at graduation. While the college offers numerous resources to aid students who are struggling with their mental health, there needs to be improved communication of those efforts to better enable students to complete their studies uninterrupted.

Many professors bend over backwards to help students who they know are feeling overwhelmed, but there should be a clearer collegewide procedure on how to effectively help students who are in the midst of a crisis. Many students don't access help or bring their professors into the picture until substantial absences have been accumulated. Faculty should be proactive in alerting the Every Advantage for a Successful Education system whenever students have two consecutive unexplained absences. As the college's Strategic Plan implementation committees continue to assess how the college will evolve in the coming years, members of the college need clarification from Senior Vice President and Provost Stan Wearden on how to handle these situations. With the programs offered, a necessary next step needs to be taken toward educating students, staff and faculty and better communicating how students can rebound from mental health struggles.

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The United Staff of Columbia College as well as faculty and student supporters rallied Dec. 8, demanding a cost-of-living adjustment in their new contract, which has been in negotiations since 2012, according to Nick Hoepfner, president of US of CC.

» PHOTOS G-JUN YAM/CHRONICLE

‘Where did all the money go?’

Staff members rally for cost of living adjustment, foresee a possible ‘brain drain’ of college employees

» MEGAN BENNETT
CAMPUS EDITOR

ERIC KOPPEN, a repair technician in the Cinema Art + Science Department, commutes two-and-a-half hours by train to work every day from his home in Sandwich, Illinois. Because he cannot afford a car, Koppen must rely on carpools to the suburbs to then take the train into the city.

Koppen, who also teaches part-time at the college for extra money, is also working as a technician at another institution and takes freelance work during the summer to make ends meet.

Koppen was hired as a full-time staff member in 2007 after graduating from the then-Film and Video Program. At the time, he lived in Naperville, Illinois, but then moved to Aurora, Illinois, and finally to Sandwich—further away from the city

each time—to find less expensive housing.

“With my paycheck not increasing to match any [inflation], I’ve had to keep moving out so I could keep continuing to afford rent, utilities, food [and] stuff like that,” he said.

Koppen said the college’s staff union members have not received a cost-of-living adjustment since 2012 while negotiating under a renewed contract from 2010, creating challenges for staff members college-wide. A new contract has not been signed since the union has been bargaining for a COLA.

Due to hikes in taxes and dues, Koppen said the money he keeps after everything comes out of his paycheck is equivalent to \$100 less than he made when he began working at Columbia eight years ago.

“Cost of living raises haven’t kept up with raises in taxes and things like that. That

is on top of the costs of everything else increasing,” he said.

Koppen is one of many staff members who say they are affected by a lack of significant raises and are bargaining for a 5 percent COLA in their new contract.

Approximately 100 staff, faculty and students rallied Dec. 8 in front of the 600 S. Michigan Ave. Building, urging the college administration to grant COLA.

Participants in the rally walked in a circle screaming chants, including ‘hey, hey, ho, ho, where did all the money go?’ all while with holding signs and using noise-makers to bring attention to their efforts for a COLA.

In their previous efforts before the rally, members of United Staff of Columbia College placed soda cans and signs throughout campus buildings clad with the phrase “COLA.” US of CC members also gained signatures for their petition by standing in Columbia buildings in the days leading up to the rally.

Tanya Harasym, coordinator of operations at the Learning Studio and Communications Chair for US of CC, said a rally was the “natural next step” in raising awareness of the issue.

“A lot of people in the membership were ready to take some kind of action,” Harasym said. “They are sick of talking about it [and] negotiating back and forth, which has been

going on for about three years with not much to speak for. We want to do something a little more loud, a little more out there.”

Nick Hoepfner, president of the US of CC and an engineer in the Radio Department, said COLA is one of the union’s most prominent bargaining issues.

Dan McCallum, coordinator of the Intermediate Equipment Facility and a US of CC member, said he hopes demonstrations like the COLA rally will gain student and faculty attention and support.

McCallum, who has worked at the college as a student and a part-time staff member since 2008 before becoming full time in 2012, said current salary issues with staff could deter people from wanting to become full-time staff members. He added that because of inflation, he is essentially making \$1,100 less annually than when he began, but his monthly bills are nearly \$1,000 more than they once were due to higher cost of living, increased Metra fares and student loans for him and his wife.

“The college is going to see it at some point as a brain drain,” he said. “People that have been here for many years that have experience teaching, working with students and know their facilities really well are going to go to DePaul [University], Northwestern [University] or somewhere completely different just so they can get better pay.”

During the rally, Hoepfner, JeeYuen Lee, development and communications director for the Center for Community Arts Partnerships and secretary of US of CC’s bargaining team; and Mary Badger, the union’s negotiations chair



Cinema Art + Science Department staff members Eric Koppen and Dan McCallum both said their salaries have not accommodated cost-of-living increases and other inflationary expenses, making what they currently earn essentially less than their beginning salaries.

» PHOTOS G-JUN YAM/CHRONICLE

SEE STAFF, PAGE 11

Street artist gives campus building a new facade

» LAUREN KOSTIUK
CAMPUS REPORTER

THE WABASH ARTS Corridor has hosted 18 art installations from Columbia alumni, esteemed street artists and Chicago's art community this year, including recent work from Los Angeles-based street artist Morley, according to Mark Kelly, vice president of Student Success.

To kick off his new exhibition, "The Writing's On The Wall," at Beauty & Brawn Art Gallery and Think Space in Logan Square, Morley painted an original mural on the wall of the 424 S. Wabash Ave. Building on Dec. 11 in collaboration with WAC and Columbia.

Morley said he loves creating something others can interact with, adding that being able to paint a mural in Chicago, with permission, is a real treat.

"I feel like a lot of my art is relatively simple, and the reason I do that is because I like people to fill in the blanks themselves," Morley said. "I always say my work is only as good as someone else makes it."

Morley specializes in bold, typographic posters with a mix of humor and hope. His recent installation on Wabash Avenue is called "Penny for your thoughts," which depicts vacant space with thought bubbles that people can take photos with and post online with their own thoughts in the bubbles.

Lindsey Meyers, curator and owner of the gallery, said she felt an emotional attraction to his work. Meyers added that the two of them have been discussing the exhibit since June 2015.

"It has been a real labor of love," Meyers said. "I hope he understands my love of street art and that I am not a traditional gallery."

Meyers, who attended Columbia from 1995–1997, thought Morley's work would be a fun addition to WAC. She said she hopes it will bring an uplifting spirit to the city during an "interesting" time in Chicago and the world.

"This is really going to reshape how we think of our campus," Kelly said. "This is going to become a destination for those who care about public art."

Morley said he was intimidated to be a part of WAC because it features many esteemed street artists he admires, but he is honored to be recognized among them.

Kelly said he also wants art to become more present in students' daily lives so they can animate the culture of the city.

"We want to push our students out in the world," Kelly said. "It is no longer enough for a student to be in a classroom, we have to go out into the world. I think the Wabash Arts Corridor becomes a metaphor for that thinking."

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Los Angeles-based street artist Morley created an interactive mural in partnership with Wabash Arts Corridor and Columbia College at 424 S. Wabash Ave.

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7:00 pm

Tuesday December 15

Jazz Combo Fest

4:00 pm

Columbia College Percussion Ensemble at the Sherwood 7:00 pm

Wednesday December 16

Breakaway: A Capella Ensemble at HAUS
Pop Rock Ensemble: Showcase in Concert

12:00 pm

7:00 pm

Thursday December 17

Martha Mooke Violin Concert
Fusion Ensemble in Concert

12:00 pm

7:00 pm

Friday December 18

Composition 3 Concert at the Sherwood

7:00 pm

*Events marked with an asterisk do not give Recital Attendance Credit

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Faculty Senate approves new major proposals

» LAUREN KOSTIUK
CAMPUS REPORTER

THE FACULTY SENATE at its Dec. 11 meeting approved proposals for three new majors and a new minor, which will be sent to the Office of the Provost for approval.

Previously, the Academic Affairs Committee formed four subcommittees of three members each who reviewed the proposals and later discussed and voted on the recommendations as a whole committee during its Dec. 4 meeting.

The four programs would be housed in the School of Media Arts.

The four approved programs include bachelor's degrees in animation and interdisciplinary documentary in the Cinema Art + Science Department, a bachelor's in social media and digital strategy in the Communication and Media Innovation Department

and a minor in user experience in the Interactive Arts & Media Department.

Jeff Abell, an associate professor in the Art & Art History Department, said courses for some of the proposals already exist, so the new programs would allow students to earn degrees in majors they are already taking classes for.

"This simply acknowledges the focus of [students'] work," Abell said. "It is basically just a rearrangement of what is going on."

The Faculty Senate also continued developing a faculty workload policy that would create a points system to value faculty service "that would fit the culture of Columbia without changing it," said James Van Manen, an associate professor in the American Sign Language Department.

The Faculty Senate plans to vote on the proposal during its



» G-JUN YAM/CHRONICLE

The Faculty Senate approved three new majors and a new minor Dec. 11 to be sent to the Provost for approval and discussed a new faculty workload policy.

next meeting in February, but Van Manen said he does not think it is feasible because of the complexity of the system and procedure that still need to be worked out.

"There is no point system on the books," Van Manen said. "We can't rush trying to put something together."

Van Manen said he wants to start applying the thinking structure of the policy with a "soft implementation" that would slowly ease the college into the policy during the next academic

year, which will allow any issues to be solved.

Jeffrey Meece, associate vice president of Enrollment Management, visited the Faculty Senate and discussed four things the Office of Enrollment plans to focus on, including improving accuracy of admissions, processes and systems; implementing strategic recruitment practices; coordinating customer service; and improving the campus experience.

Currently, the college's "melt

rate"—how many students commit to enroll at a given college but do not actually attend the school—is at 19 percent, which is twice the national average, Meece said. He said he hopes to create a "concierge" process for admitted students and train the entire admissions team on how to better meet prospective students' needs.

"Something you are going to see over the next few years is that [traditional freshmen] are not going to be the only targeted group we are going after," Meece said.

With the Fall 2015 drop in new undergraduate and graduate enrollment, the admissions department wants to strengthen current graduate programs and build new online programs along with implementing a target recruitment philosophy, Meece said. He also said he plans to increase admitted students' participation in the college's hosted events to engage more students and increase enrollment.

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Nonprofit aims to help artists manage student debt

» MEGAN BENNETT
CAMPUS EDITOR

AS MOUNTING STUDENT debt generates a national conversation, a Columbia alumnus aims to help artists pay off loans, afford rent and continue to pursue their passions.

Derrick Trumbly, a 2005 theatre alumnus, began the first capital campaign Nov. 16 for Ed.Arts, a new nonprofit organization aimed at educating students and suggesting ways to avoid overwhelming student debt.

Ed.Arts is working to raise \$40,000 through an Indiegogo campaign by Dec. 31, Trumbly said, adding that donated money will go toward hiring a grant writer and expanding the organization's service programs, which will include providing access to financial information and educational databases for debt-ridden artists.

As of press time, the online campaign has raised \$2,101.

Trumbly, a working actor, said he was inspired to create Ed.Arts after seeing his peers struggle with large amounts of student debt and experiencing those struggles himself.

"It appeared that if you went to a good school and took out a lot of loans to do so, suddenly you couldn't afford to pursue your dreams because of that debt," he said. "The pursuit of art becomes a rich man's game."

Ed.Arts' mission is to educate students going into artistic disciplines about how to avoid hefty amounts of student debt and how to manage that debt after they graduate, according to the website.

It aims to provide student debt relief to select artists who have continued in the arts for at least seven years after leaving school—long enough to show commitment to their craft, Trumbly said.

"If you've stuck with it for seven years you're probably going to keep going, and you probably don't have your student debt paid off," he said.

Jeff Ginsberg, an associate professor in the Theatre Department and one of Trumbly's former professors, said he has supported Ed.Arts through donations, adding that the nonprofit was founded at a time when student debt relief has become a national concern.

"I don't know how I would get out of the burden of debt if I was leaving as a 22-year-old with \$80,000–\$100,000 worth of debt," Ginsberg said. "I can't conceive of how one deals with that. Certainly, as much education a student and [their] parent has going into the whole educational process, how to facilitate smart expenditures is really important."

In addition to Trumbly, there are six members of the board of directors, including marketer Susan Griffin, who met Trumbly about three years ago through her daughter, who is also an actress.

Griffin, who is based in New York and is also the Chief Marketing



Ed.Arts, a nonprofit which seeks to help artists avoid crushing student debt, has raised more than \$2,000 through its Indiegogo campaign.

» Courtesy DERRICK TRUMBLY

Officer at BrainJuicer, said the nonprofit already has plans to work with several high schools across the country in early 2016 to educate students interested in the arts about student loans and how to avoid debt.

Regardless of whether Ed.Arts reaches its online campaign goal, the board is committed to looking into other ways to fundraise, Griffin said.

"If we bankrupt artists, we bankrupt society in a way," she said. "Artists communicate on many different levels, but they make people think and feel. They make people question and ponder certain answers that they might not have thought about as deeply without an artist's gift."

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» YOU SHOULD KNOW

Relations director wants to increase student–alumni connections

» CAROLYN BRADLEY
CAMPUS REPORTER

Working in the arts has always been part of Miriam Smith's life. Smith, the new executive director of Alumni Relations & Annual Giving who began working under the title Aug. 3, said she knew she wanted to be an opera singer at 10 years old. Smith finished vocal music studies at Sarah Lawrence College in 2003 and received a master's degree in music and opera in 2007 from the State University of New York at Binghamton. From 2007–2010, she worked with Columbia Artists Management, a classical artist management firm, where she was the associate manager booking various classical artists.

Though Columbia has struggled in the past with its alumni relations initiatives, Smith has specialized in working with graduates from arts-based institutions for the past several years, most recently as the manager of Alumni Engagement and Giving at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

The Chronicle sat down with Smith to discuss her artistic background, her experience connecting alumni and current students and how she plans to work with alumni at Columbia.

THE CHRONICLE: How did you find your way to Chicago?

MIRIAM SMITH: I found out I would be moving because my family relocated here this summer. I was interested in trying to find a creative institution because I love being around creatives. I am a creative, of course. I wanted to find a creative institution I could add value to. When I saw this position come up at Columbia, it intrigued me because it was not only a creative institution, but it focuses on a variety of creative industries, which is really exciting for me to learn about.

What do you hope to accomplish through your role at Columbia?

In my role, I have been brought on to build a robust alumni relations program. I am really hoping to continue the great work that has been done in previous years, but I

am hoping to build on that work and focus on further engaging our alumni community within the Chicago area, but also elsewhere. It looks like implementing and creating activities and events to bond alumni with their peers and with the college community at large. We are finding ways to engage students with alumni while they are still here on campus. I am also hoping to collaborate more with the various departments across campus and to work with them to bring in alumni to work with current students. I am looking to strengthen the bond between the students and the alumni community.

How have alumni and students been connected this year?

We have had a few activities and events this year already. We participated in Columbia Weekend with an Alumni Day. We have a large number of [alumni] that live in New York City. We just had a great alumni reception with [President and CEO Kwang-Wu] Kim last week in New York City [and] had about 60 [alumni] come out for that event. That is a big initiative for us to start looking at other markets where a large number of alumni reside and start to reactivate those regions. We also have rolled out our Alumni Roundtables program this semester, in which we bring [alumni] back to campus to speak with students. This semester alone, we have had Paul Garnes (BA '96), the executive producer of the film "Selma." We have also had Michael Stahl-David (BA '05), a former actor, come speak to the students. We had documentarian Suree Towfighnia (MFA '06) come to screen her film and speak to documentary film students. Most recently, we had Aaron Nelson (BA '12) who is playing Simba in "The Lion King," come and speak to dance students.

How do you think involvement with alumni might improve current students' college experience?

I am excited about that initiative. I really thought the students felt inspired and connected with the [alumni] that were able to come and talk to them. Even [alumni] love the experience and hearing from the students about what they are currently

» SANTIAGO COVARRUBIAS/CHRONICLE



Miriam Smith, executive director of Alumni Relations & Annual Giving, said she enjoys being in a creative environment like Columbia and she likes how dedicated the campus community is to its interests.

doing and how Columbia changed or stayed the same. I think it is going to be an interesting program and something that will inspire some of the alums to impart some of their wisdom to current students. I think it enhances the student experience, department by department, but I think it is a good way for students to have a one-on-one interaction with [alumni] and to have the feeling of 'You were once in my shoes and now you are successful in whatever field you are in.'

What do you find unique about the Columbia environment?

The students are dedicated to their fields and their industries. Students and alumni are very eager to collaborate with one another and to support each other. No matter what industry they are affiliated with, there is a lot of collaboration that happens and a lot of support, which I think is important and nice to see as a new member of the community.

How are alumni relations different at art colleges?

With alumni, it is a lot about connecting to the person's individual experience at the college. There are a lot of similarities at Columbia, because, at the end of the day, no matter where you have gone, people have had an experience at an institution that is

their own experience. From a developmental alumni relations' standpoint, it is [my intention] to find within those individuals why they liked the college, what brought them to the college and what their experiences were at the college. It is up to me to find out, from those experiences, how to get them further engaged with the college.

When would be an effective time for the college to reach out to its alumni?

We have to start at the student level. We need to educate students that the alumni relations department is here and let them know of our goals, initiatives and activities we are now planning. Then they can understand when they become [alumni], this is something they can look forward to. Students eventually become [alumni], so starting at the student level, and letting them know we are here and what we do is really important.

How was your first semester here?

Columbia is a great place to work. I think people are dedicated to the work they do here and they are passionate about the work they do here. I would say I have seen the same thing from students and alumni. It excites me to see what is to come for the next few months, and into the future.

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College's South Loop history unfolds with exhibit

» CAROLYN BRADLEY
CAMPUS REPORTER

STUDENTS IN THIS semester's "Public History: Presenting and Interpreting the Past" course gathered on the second floor of the library, 624 S. Michigan Ave., for the Dec. 9 opening of the students' exhibit, "Creative Properties: Columbia's South Loop Sidewalk Campus Since 1977."

The exhibit features both past and current photographs of the campus buildings, along with brief descriptions of the background of each facility.

Daniel Ruffolo, a senior audio arts & acoustics major, said he researched the 600 S. Michigan Ave. Building, also known as the Alexandroff Campus Center.

The building—completed in 1907—was considered a skyscraper, even though it was only

15 stories tall, he said. Ruffolo said the window design, stone detailing and marble in the lobby remain unchanged from the time of the building's construction.

Ruffolo said his photographs illustrate the building's evolution and the contrast between the intense environment of the present day and the quieter city of the early 20th century.

"You walk around and you think it is just a school, but there's a lot more hidden within the walls," Ruffolo said. "The story is within the bricks."

Erin McCarthy, acting chair and associate professor of the Humanities, History & Social Sciences Department who teaches the course, said students collaborated with the College Archives & Special Collections for the exhibit.

McCarthy added that the exhibit builds off the "From Adams to the South Loop: 1890 to 1977" exhibit, which opened

in the fall and featured research from McCarthy's Summer 2015 "Public History: Presenting and Interpreting the Past" course.

"Our focus shifted a bit," McCarthy said. "In general, there was more information on these buildings because we were going back to the mid 1970s. We talk about Columbia purchasing the buildings and the creation of a South Loop campus. Those themes were not present in the first half of the exhibit."

McCarthy said the exhibit's themes included the growth of the college, the acquisition of buildings, the creation of the South Loop's campus and the college's use of its various properties.

Melissa Nuti, a senior design major who researched the Residence Center at 731 S. Plymouth Court, said the building was originally erected as a publishing facility for Lakeside Press.

"There's still creative energy that exudes from each of these buildings," Nuti said. "Even though they had different prior uses, there

was creativity fostered within them long before [Columbia] was ever in them."

Dominic Rossetti, a digital collections specialist in the library, said the archives house historic, century-old photos and depictions of the buildings predating Columbia's ownership.

"We do not see a lot of that history today, so it is nice for the students to be exposed to it," he said.

Kelsey O'Connell, an archives and catalogue assistant in the library, said the project relates to the archivists' jobs because the archivists collect and preserve information that builds upon the college's historical data.

"The buildings' histories come off as lackluster because Chicago has a rich architectural history," O'Connell said. "What we see in the individual histories of the buildings Columbia operates out of is a strong connection to the city and the city's history and the creative nature of the college."

cbradley@chroniclemail.com



» LOU FOGLIA/CHRONICLE
The "Creative Properties: Columbia's South Loop Sidewalk Campus Since 1977" exhibit, located on the second floor of the library, located at 624 S. Michigan Ave., gives Columbia a glimpse of how it became part of the South Loop through historical and current photos of the buildings.

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COMMENCEMENT, FROM FRONT

the contract, Columbia was able to arrange the return to the Chicago Theatre for one year.

"It's not like we have a choice to continue with the Chicago Theatre," Kelly said. "We have a long-term agreement with the Auditorium [Theater, and they are] going to make sure the NFL Draft going forward is not going to impact us. We expect to return and have a long association with the Auditorium Theatre going forward."

The college officially changed its commencement venue to the Roosevelt Auditorium Theater for the May 2015 commencement ceremonies after the college was unable to reach a multi-year deal with the Chicago Theatre, as reported Oct. 20, 2014, by The Chronicle.

Natalie Jordan, a senior design major, said because Columbia's campus is in the heart of the city, it is appropriate to have the Chicago Theatre as the graduation venue.

"Our campus is Chicago," Jordan said. "We have maybe three blocks we walk between,

but this is our campus. It only makes sense to go to the Chicago Theatre. It was almost weird to have graduation at another school's theater."

Jordan said while she is excited to graduate in general and would not mind having the ceremony in either venue, it may have been disappointing to have a ceremony in another school's theater, whereas the Chicago Theatre is a shared and recognized city space.

"Everyone wants to see their school name on the Chicago Theatre marquee," she said.

Having the ceremonies at the Chicago Theatre may hold more significance to Columbia students because of their artistic nature, said Jameel Bridgewater, a senior design major.

“Everyone wants to see their school name on the Chicago Theatre marquee.”

— Natalie Jordan —

The 2015 commencement ceremonies were held at Roosevelt University's Auditorium Theater, 50 E. Congress Parkway, after the previous location, The Chicago Theatre, declined to sign a multi-year contract.



» G-JUN-YAM/CHRONICLE

"The Chicago Theatre is extremely historical," Bridgewater said. "It [hosts] some of the biggest shows [and] some of the biggest talent. As Columbia students, we

are some of the biggest talents. We are a show. It would be extremely important for us to have the feeling [of] walking across the stage, having that big audience—that historical feeling in the iconic [theater] within Chicago to walk and start the rest of our lives."

Kelly said because both the Auditorium Theater and the Chicago Theatre have positive attributes—the Auditorium Theater having more capacity and being on campus and the Chicago Theatre

has the iconic marquee that will have Columbia's name in lights—graduating seniors will still have a commencement to remember.

"Each are lovely facilities—I am confident of this: Our students, like they did last year at the Auditorium Theater, will have five incredible ceremonies that will make [students] really proud to be part of Columbia," Kelly said.

mbennett@chroniclemail.com



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Columbia
COLLEGE CHICAGO

STAFF, FROM PAGE 3

and director of Theater Facilities in the Theatre Department, visited the college's administrative offices and delivered boxes of signed petitions demanding a COLA to Michelle Gates, vice president of Business Affairs and CFO, who praised the union leaders for their "professional" approach to discussions and their "humor" with the COLA cans around campus and said the college was working on an offer for the union. There were more than 750 signatures in support of the union, Lee said at the rally.

"[Columbia] is committed to ensuring a long-term, positive and healthy work environment for all employees, which includes faculty and staff, non-union and union," college spokeswoman Cara Birch said in a statement. "We continue to align resources with institutional priorities, and in that context, we continue to negotiate at the bargaining table and are confident we can reach a fair agreement with US of CC."

The union will meet Dec. 18 with the college, which will present a contract counterproposal to the union, Hoepfner said.

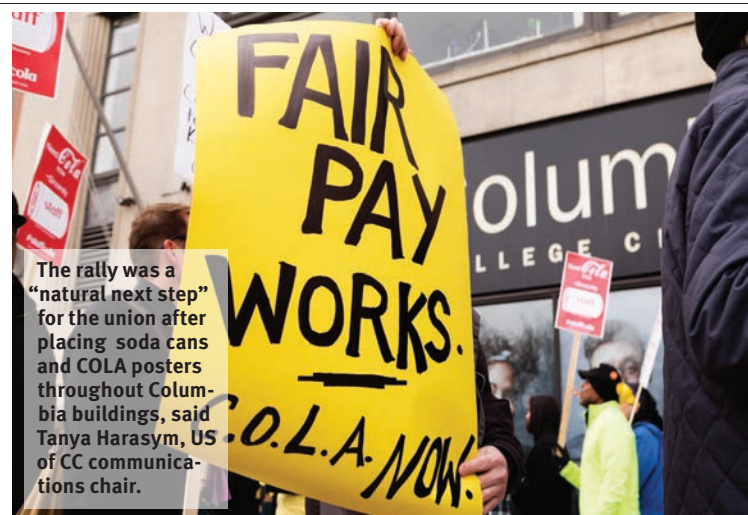
"I personally doubt they can meet our offer," Lee said to staff at the rally regarding how she feels about the counterproposal. "Let's not let the [winter] break [throw off] our momentum."

Hoepfner said after he receives the counter proposal, the union will see what is or is not included and make plans accordingly.

While a COLA is the largest issue pressing collegewide staff members right now, Hoepfner said staff are bargaining over other issues as well, including the union's refusal to accept the merit-based pay system favored by the college administration and ensuring job security.

"I'm encouraged that we meet regularly," he said. "It sounds like our concerns are being heard, if not presented to people inside the administration that can act on them, be it making counter proposals, accepting them [or] maybe unfortunately rejecting them."

The college also commissioned a job classification study for the staff, which is meant to clarify the rationale behind staff compensation.



The rally was a "natural next step" for the union after placing soda cans and COLA posters throughout Columbia buildings, said Tanya Harasym, US of CC communications chair.



Approximately 100 staff, faculty and students took part in the US of CC cost of living adjustment rally, according to union secretary JeeYun Lee

» PHOTOS G-JUN YAM/CHRONICLE

Though originally set to be completed in June, Hoepfner said the study was extended to December and added that he was not told when the study would be completed this month.

Though disappointed in the delay, Hoepfner said he is still pleased the college remains committed to completing the study.

Koppen said he thinks other staff issues that come out of trying to negotiate a contract could also escalate to the level of COLA.

"I don't think the administration realizes how much we do," he said. "There are some of us that feel ignored or unheard, and these things will just continue to escalate until we do feel heard—until we get administration saying, 'This is a big issue and you are working hard. You do deserve it.' Until that happens, we have to keep going until we do get some type of response."

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» Photos by EVAN BELL/CHRONICLE

» ZOË EITEL
ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER

IN 1966, CHICAGO'S Uptown neighborhood gained a new bookstore by the name of The Book Box, 4812 N. Broadway. Currently named Shake, Rattle & Read, the store is set to close its doors in 2016 after a 50th anniversary party and a going-out-of-business sale where everything must go.

Ric Addy, the owner of Shake, Rattle & Read, said he purchased the store from his sister and brother-in-law in 1986 when they retired.

"When I went into the store, it mostly [sold] books, and I said, 'This place needs records,'" Addy said. "To let people know there was a new owner, and there was going to be new stuff in there, I changed the name to Shake, Rattle & Read, but I still leave the name The Book Box on the sign."

Addy said after running the store for 30

Shake, Rattle & Read has been in the same location since it was The Book Box in 1966, but owner Ric Addy said he is not against the idea of someone relocating the store.

years, he is ready to retire. He added that his first choice was to sell the store, but his landlord refused.

Addy said aside from a few alterations he and his sister have made, the store has not been updated since its opening, and the electricity and plumbing are both out of date.

Neighborhood residents said they are sad that the space is going to change, but Addy said it is happening at the right time.

"As much as people love the store, I'm not seeing it at the cash register," Addy said. "Especially weekdays, we're averaging 5 to 8 customers a day. Back in the '90s, we'd be getting five customers in an hour."

Many people who visit the store window shop or browse without buying, which influenced Addy's decision to close.



Ric Addy, owner of Shake, Rattle & Read, said business has been slow recently, and he cannot live off what he makes on the weekends anymore, so he decided to sell the store and retire.



"I think one day [Uptown] will become the big entertainment district they're talking about, but I don't have time to wait around for it," Addy said. "I've put everything I could into [the store] for 30 years."

Addy said he has enjoyed spending the last 30 years meeting customers of all ages and backgrounds.

"We have 50 people in our group who do various things, and most of us have been in the store and love it," said Ben Masters, a member of the horror movie festival Terror in the Aisles. "Ric Addy has a warm personality and is extremely knowledgeable."

Masters added that he thinks Chicago is losing an interesting piece of its culture now that the store is closing.

"If you haven't been to Shake, Rattle & Read, you should go as much as possible before it's closed," Masters said. "If you have been to Shake, Rattle & Read, you

should still go as much as possible before it's closed."

Greg Carroll, interim executive director of Business Partners, The Chamber for Uptown, said Shake, Rattle & Read is an "Uptown tradition."

"[Addy's] store is just one of those anchor businesses for Uptown," Carroll said. "It has such an amazing history, and it's meant a lot to many people in this neighborhood."

Addy said he plans to host a party in mid-January to celebrate 50 years, with sales beginning in February starting at 50 percent off and increasing the discount until everything is gone. He added that the store will likely close in July.

"I'd like to thank everyone for their support for 50 years," Addy said. "That's pretty damn good."

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behind the beat

» JACOB WITTICH
MANAGING EDITOR

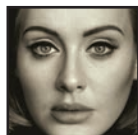
Highlights of 2015

2015 marked an exciting and significant shift in the music that will come to define the 2010s—away from the more commercial, manufactured acts like Katy Perry or Miley Cyrus and toward more indie, alternative sounds like those of Tove Lo or Banks. Below are my picks for the five best releases of the year.



A\$AP Rocky
AT.LONG.LAST.A\$AP
Released May 26

Harlem rapper A\$AP Rocky showed major growth in his sophomore album through genre-bending tracks like "L\$D." With standout tracks like "Everyday" and "Electric Body," Rocky solidified his star potential. He even took the album on tour with rapper Tyler, The Creator that was almost as creative and visually appealing as the series of music videos released to promote the work.



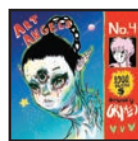
Adele
25
Released Nov. 20

Adele's long-awaited third album took the world by storm and has continued to sell hundreds of thousands of copies weekly since its release. The album has relatable, yet emotional, themes such as making peace with growing up into adulthood in tracks "When We Were Young" and "Million Years Ago" and longing for a lost love in the piano-driven "All I Ask."



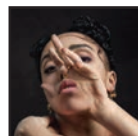
The Weeknd
Beauty Behind the Madness
Released Aug. 28

The Weeknd is known for his dark themes of sex, drugs and self-loathing. *Beauty Behind the Madness* continues tackling those themes but strays from his more experimental approach present in his earlier albums for a traditional pop sound. The album allowed The Weeknd to break into mainstream markets without sacrificing his artistic integrity. Standout tracks include "The Hills," "Tell Your Friends" and "Prisoner," which features Lana Del Rey.



Grimes
Art Angels
Released Nov. 6

Grimes' new album *Art Angels* is a feminist anthem—and not because she wrote, recorded and engineered the entire project by herself. The album is an unlikely blend of bubblegum, pop and punk that takes a stand against the music industry. The album's lead single, "Flesh Without Blood," rejects the "Barbie doll" image forced on many female artists. In "California," Grimes proclaims her music comes from her soul, rather than a thirst for fame. Grimes is reclaiming her identity and her artistry.



FKA twigs
M3LL155X
Released Aug. 13

Pronounced "Melissa," electro-R&B musician FKA twigs' third EP is an assertion of her femininity. The EP was released with a high-concept, 16-minute video that explores themes of pain, femininity, sex and power. The album is sexy, dark, unsettling and weird, following in the footsteps of twigs' previous works. *M3LL155X* is twigs' most intellectually stimulating, yet most accessible project yet. Every one of its songs are powerful, important and sonically pleasing.

jwittich@chroniclemail.com



Friday, Dec. 19

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\$15

Wednesday, Dec. 16

JOANNA NEWSOM

The Chicago Theatre
175 N. State St.
8 p.m.
\$29.50–\$59.50

Tuesday, Dec. 29

THE HUSH SOUND

Thalia Hall
1807 S. Allport St.
7:30 p.m.
\$20

Thursday, Dec. 17

EMPIRE OF THE SUN

Riviera Theatre
4746 N. Racine Ave.
8:30 p.m.
\$35

Wednesday, Dec. 30

NICK WATERHOUSE

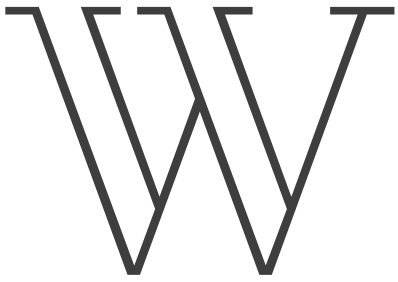
Schubas Tavern
3159 N. Southport Ave.
9 p.m.
\$20, 18+

FEATURED PHOTO



Matthew Healy, lead singer, guitarist and pianist of The 1975, performed at the Riviera Theatre on Dec. 8.

» SANTIAGO COVARRUBIAS/CHRONICLE



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audiofile

» FRANK ENYART
ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER

What began as a way to meet girls and fulfill class requirements became a career-long endeavor for the men of world-renowned a capella group Straight No Chaser. The 10-piece ensemble, which began as a collegiate project at Indiana University, has achieved massive success, including performances on “Late Night with Jimmy Fallon” and the release of five studio albums. Founding member and baritone David Roberts, a Chicago resident, spoke with The Chronicle about the group’s history, what to expect from SNC’s two-show stop in Chicago and what it’s like to be an a capella group in today’s musical landscape.

THE CHRONICLE: How did Straight No Chaser come together?

DAVID ROBERTS: We started at IU. The founding members were all part of [choral group] Saint Hoosiers and [some were] music majors. As a requirement, we had to be in a choir, and the director and founder of SNC Dan Ponce said he wanted to create an a capella group at Indiana University. Some of the other schools, like University of Illinois, University of Michigan and [others]

Group’s dynamic vocals enlivens holidays

as you go east [already had] collegiate a capella groups, and there wasn’t one at IU. The goal was just to start a legacy, try to sing for girls and [eat] free food. We started a group, and when we graduated, we auditioned new members and left it at the university. Then in 2007, Randy [Stein] posted some stuff on YouTube from a concert when we were students, and that snowballed into getting signed by Atlantic and now having music careers.

What is your favorite arrangement to perform live?

We do a couple of songs in the show that are mash-ups. I don’t want to give too much away, but we close the show with one of them where we mash up two of the biggest songs in the past 20 years. It’s a lot of fun to see the expression on people’s faces when we start and then go into the second one. To hear the response is a lot of fun. That’s what’s exciting about what we do. We have a platform to take some of our favorite songs and greatest tunes of all time and mash them together and come up with a creative new presentation of them.

How has the reemergence of the a capella genre affected your success?

There’s an expression that “rising tide floats all boats.” We definitely have benefited. We

didn’t sign [with Atlantic records] until 2008, and I think that was around the first season of “Glee” and “The Sing Off,” and I think we got really lucky that the timing was exactly representing the market’s desire for more vocally authentic music. It was the market speaking its opinion.

What is it like to perform in Chicago?

It’s always fun to do a show in your hometown or where you’re living. Obviously, living in

Chicago, I have a lot of friends and family [coming to shows]. Irrespective of our living there, the audiences in Chicago are some of our strongest audiences. They’re always really enthusiastic. I don’t think it matters that I live there, as much as that the reception we get there is fantastic by itself. Add the level that I know a lot of the people, and it makes it that much sweeter.

fenyart@chroniclemail.com



▶ All I want for Christmas is... Staff Playlist

» ABBY SEITZ OPINIONS EDITOR	» ZOË EITEL ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER	» LAUREN KOSTIUK CAMPUS REPORTER	» MEGAN BENNETT CAMPUS EDITOR
Hanukkah Blessings I Hate Christmas! My Menorah Eight Nights at Joy Sufganiot	Barenaked Ladies Ren and Stimpy Chevonne Joe Black AKA Pella	Milk and Cookies Money, Power, Glory Gold Million Dollar Bills Therapy	Melanie Martinez Lana Del Rey Marina and The Diamonds Lorde All Time Low
Boyfriend Friends Trap Queen Booty Banana Pancakes	Justin Bieber Raury Fetty Wap Jennifer Lopez Jack Johnson	Boys Boys Boys To Be Alone Birthday Cake At the Beach Money	Lady Gaga Hozier Rihanna The Avett Brothers The Flying Lizards

Have a 'Dragon Ball' at ConAltDelete

» **FRANK ENYART**
ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER

THE JAPANESE CULTURE and anime convention ConAltDelete will hold its third incarnation at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare, 9300 Bryn Mawr Ave., in Rosemont, Illinois, Dec. 18–20.

According to Amanda Atkins, division head of live events with AnimeCon, the event has grown from about 1,000 attendees in its first year to an anticipated 4,000 this year.

The convention features a wide array of programming, ranging from traditional Q&A panels and events to concerts and interactive social events.

Atkins added that the desire for this diversity in programming stemmed from her experience

at other conventions. The long-time anime and Japanese culture fan saw the need for interactive events to allow anime lovers to meet and form relationships—as Atkins did with the vice president of AnimeCon, the organization behind ConAltDelete.

Atkins said convention highlights will include concerts featuring such groups as electronic industrial band V is for Villains and venues such as a “maid cafe” at which cosplayers dress in maid garb and serve patrons.

Atkins added that the most popular event is “Whose Line Is It Anime?” an anime-centric spin-off of popular improv show “Whose Line Is It Anyway?”

“We write skits and prompts,” Atkins said. “The cast doesn’t get those beforehand.... [The host] will

give them a prompt and they’ll just go from there. Sometimes it does get out of hand, but it’s so funny.”

Atkins added that another popular event is the “Winter Celebration Ball,” an “anime prom” of sorts.

“A lot of the kids are younger and haven’t gone to prom yet.... You dress up and dance to anime and nerd music. It’s actually really fun,” Atkins said.

She added that before the ball, the convention hosts dance lessons so attendees who may be nervous or struggle with social anxiety can easily meet others.

One panelist, whose panel will break the mold of the traditional Q&A, is Yasmin Alesia, an anime lover whose food blog Geek Grubs posts recipes for foods based on video games and anime.

For her panel, titled “Food in Anime and Video Games,” Alesia will include tips and tricks on how to make treats from popular anime.

“Japan has really cool food, so I thought that would be really great to cover,” Alesia said.



» Courtesy YASMIN ALESIA

According to her blog GeekGrubs.com, ConAltDelete panelist Alesia made these “Dragon Ball Cake Balls” for her “Dragon Ball Z” fan husband. These treats are just one example of the things she will include in her panel.

She added that as a food blogger, she saw the need to help anime lovers with tricks on how to successfully replicate the dishes depicted in their favorite games.

As a long-time anime fan, Atkins said the convention is an approachable and flexible way to be involved with a niche culture.

“The convention is its own little pocket,” Atkins said. “You don’t

have to worry because everybody there likes something you like.”

ConAltDelete takes place Dec. 18–20 in Rosemont, Illinois. Tickets are \$50 for all three days, and single day tickets range from \$30–\$40. A full schedule, ticket and lodging information can be found at ConAltDelete.com.

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'My Quarter-Life Cancer'—from treatment to remission

» ZÖE EITEL
ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER

BEING A RECENT college graduate and trying to build a career worries most young people, but having a documentary made about one's cancer diagnosis is not the route most people would choose while handling everything else.

Brianna Wellen, a 2012 journalism alumna and former editor-in-chief of *The Chronicle*, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in April, and on Dec. 8, the documentary "My Quarter-Life Cancer" came out detailing her six-month journey.

TouchVision, a Chicago-based programming service, signed on to produce the documentary after Jessica Galliart—a TouchVision digital managing editor, 2009 journalism alumna and a former editor-in chief of *The Chronicle*—pitched the idea. She coproduced the film with Kerri Pang, TouchVision producer and editor.

"I heard through the grapevine that [Wellen] was sick, and I started looking at everything she was doing to tackle this big thing ahead of her," Galliart said. "I wanted to hear more of her story, and she seemed interested in letting us follow her around for six months with a camera."

The documentary contains three parts and runs about a half hour, Galliart said.

"[Wellen] is a very intriguing, intelligent, thoughtful young woman, and I couldn't imagine doing a documentary like this on anyone else," Galliart said. "She's a journalist, and I think she was eager to tell her own story."

Galliart said the documentary shows Wellen going through chemotherapy, dealing with financial problems and talking about the emotional and physical strain she was going through.

"I was really open with them, and I kind of forgot that it was all going to be a movie everyone can watch,"

Wellen said. "People are going to learn a lot about me."

Wellen said the filming was a form of therapy, and it helped her talk through some of her issues.

"It made me think about everything I was going through in a different way than if I was doing it on my own," Wellen said.

Wellen said her family and friends helped her through the diagnosis, especially her younger sister, Madeline, who moved in with her. She added that she does

not think she could have handled everything without her sister.

"[Brianna] doesn't really talk about things much, so I think it has been helpful to talk to someone about everything that's been happening and to process it," said Madeline Wellen, a freshman art & art history major. "It's been tough for her to rewatch it, but during the process, it really helped her."

Madeline said the documentary will help other young people who have been diagnosed with a

malignancy because her sister normalizes having cancer, and people have reached out recently to thank her for allowing for the film to be made.

"I think for other people who are young and going through that, [the documentary will] make them not throw a pity party for themselves," Madeline said.

Brianna Wellen said she has been in remission since Oct. 27.

Her sister said since being diagnosed, going through treatments and finding out she was in remission, Brianna has become a more confident person.

"It's going to be so interesting to watch [the documentary] because I feel so great now, and I definitely am recovering really well," Brianna Wellen said. "To revisit the times I wasn't feeling so good is going to be interesting."

"My Quarter-Life Cancer" is available at TouchVision.com.



"My Quarter-Life Cancer" is a documentary about being a young person dealing with a cancer diagnosis, said alumna Brianna Wellen, the subject of the film.

» Courtesy TOUCHVISION

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AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE WORLD OF VENTRILOQUISM

STORY BY JEREMY FREEMAN

It was a cool, fall day in 1985 when Jonathan Geffner, 32, was wandering aimlessly around Manhattan. He had dropped out of a doctoral program in piano performance at New York University and was unfulfilled despite his achievements as a professional pianist, improvisational actor and teacher of acting. Everything changed, though, when he came across a ventriloquist performing on the street. He had never seen a ventriloquist live and became mesmerized. “This is what I must do with my life,” he remembered thinking.

“I began going to every ventriloquist performance I could find,” Geffner said. “Luckily, I was a New Yorker, so it was not too difficult to find them.” Within a couple of months, he was performing professionally, first at birthday parties, then at schools and organizations.

“Within one year, ventriloquism was my main source of income and it remains such today. I truly love it,” he said.

Geffner’s epiphany is not uncommon. Ventriloquists have entertained for centuries, but a notion has taken hold that ventriloquism has fallen to the wayside in today’s technologically advanced society. Geffner, now a successful stage ventriloquist, said he wants people to know ventriloquism is far from dying.

Tom Crowl, who has been a ventriloquist since 2005 and a fan of the performance art form, agrees that it is making a comeback.

“Ventriloquism has never really been a dying art,” Crowl said. “Just because people did not see it for years doesn’t make it a dying art. If you stop and think over the years, some of

the biggest performers were ventriloquists.” Crowl noted the success of Paul Winchell, an actor and ventriloquist best known for voicing Tigger in the original “Winnie the Pooh” episodes.

More recently, the annual “Vent Haven ConVENTion” has seen surges in attendance throughout the last few years, according to Lisa Sweasy, the curator of the Vent Haven Museum, located in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, which proudly displays the biggest collection of ventriloquist dummies in the world with 871 figures.

Sweasy said a few years ago only 400 people attended the convention; now that number has jumped to 600.

Many artists today see the modern face of ventriloquism embodied in Jeff Dunham, a Tex-

an who stormed into the mainstream in 2003 with his first Comedy Central appearance, which featured an array of characters in skits. Dunham has sold out arenas across the globe with five highly successful tours. His memorable lineup of characters ranges from grumpy old Walter to Achmed the Dead Terrorist, a suicide bomber speaking from the grave. Dunham made ventriloquism accessible to the masses, inspiring a new generation of ventriloquists.

Following in Dunham's footsteps are "America's Got Talent" contestant Terry Fator, who won season two of the show with his unique lineup of characters and this year's "AGT" winner Paul Zerdin.

While their characters are risqué and topical, the origins of ventriloquism reside in magic. The art form got its start in the late 1700s and early 1800s when French author Jean-Baptiste de La Chappelle first described it in the book, "Le Ventriloque, Ou L'engastrimythe"—French for "the ventriloquist and ventriloquism"—and explained the art as a magic trick.

The flowering of vaudeville in the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought ventriloquism to the United States.

One early American ventriloquist was native Chicagoan Edgar Bergen, who was a foil to his wisecracking dummies Charlie McCarthy, a monocled wise guy, and Mortimer Snerd, his slow-witted character, in his shows.

"Bergen approached ventriloquism in a different way than most ventriloquists in the past," said Tom Ladshaw, an expert on ventriloquism.

"Before Bergen, you had a guy with a wooden puppet who would just make jokes. That was the act, and everybody thought 'Yeah, that's funny.' Bergen added another dimension to it; he was really the first guy—particularly in the U.S.—to give those characters personality."

As Bergen continued to pave the way, more artists joined the scene, including Chicago-native Jimmy Nelson, who instantly became one of the most recognized ventriloquists with the onset of television in the 1950s and 1960s.

"I had a lot running through my mind during my first television appearance," Nelson said. "Everything was live. There were very few shows that were taped. It was in Chicago, on a local television show in a studio on top of the old State and Lake building. They had two cameras [and] there was really no format. An emcee said 'We have a young ventriloquist now on the show by the name of Jimmy Nelson. Jimmy, go ahead and do your stuff.' So I did my act, and the response was good enough that they had me back the following week."

Nelson's characters Danny O' Day and Farfel the dog changed over the years, reflecting whatever Nelson was going through at the time, he said.

What made Bergen and Nelson so entertaining was the time and effort they put into developing their characters. They didn't just pick up a puppet and create a voice—they created characters for their puppets that had depth and simultaneously appealed to children and their parents.

"A lot of amateur acts don't flesh out their main character enough," Crowl points out. "They will pull a puppet out, spend six to eight minutes on them, then pull out another puppet and spend six to eight minutes with that one. It becomes just a montage of puppets with no real characters."

Characters often derive from an event or person that impacted the performer's life. According to Jerry Breeden, a ventriloquist from Spokane, Washington, his character Mildred is

modeled after someone dear to his heart. "Mildred is an older lady who used to be a neighbor of mine," he said. "I just remember she made dynamite chocolate chip cookies."

Using the simple memory of eating chocolate chip cookies, Breeden said he was able to develop a character his viewers responded to because everyone has fond memories of a neighbor or relative who was a baker. That emotional

connection is vital, he said.

"If the audience cannot connect with the characters, all you are going to have on stage is someone playing

with a puppet," Crowl said.

Besides offering entertainment, ventriloquism also warms the hearts of people who are in a dark place in their lives, Breeden said. The prospect of making someone's life even just a bit better is ample motivation to get on stage, he explained.

"It was a warm Christmas Eve in a small Mexican border town in 1990," Breeden said. "I was part of a team that brought down truckloads of various gifts wrapped in shoeboxes for the children in this town. These kids never received gifts before in the past, so that was a special moment. I brought out Scotty, my young character, and he did a little show with the kids afterwards. It was truly an incredible moment in my life."

Trish Dunn, a ventriloquist from North Carolina said ventriloquism will continue to gain popularity because of Jeff Dunham and other rising stars. Dunn said she is excited to see what is in store for the future of ventriloquism.

"What makes ventriloquism really exciting in the near future is the fact that our young people and our teenagers spend so much time with everything being perfect," Dunn said. "Like the graphics on video games are perfect. Everything is computer perfect, and I think the wonder of ventriloquism is that it is still a person that's creating an illusion, and these up-and-comers are going to be really special to watch."

Ventriloquism has never really been a dying art. Just because people did not see it for years doesn't make it a dying art.

— Tom Crowl

”

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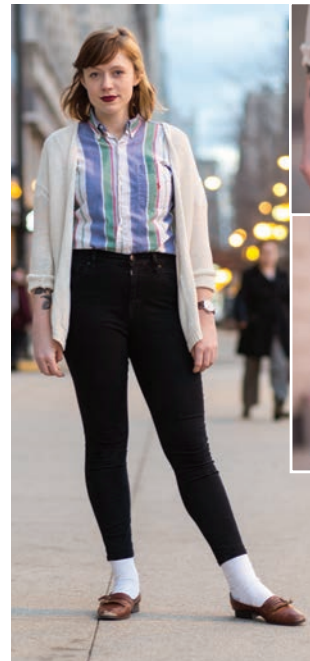
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» PHOTOS BY LOU FOGLIA & EVAN BELL/CHRONICLE

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Eboni Bryant
junior design major



Gabrielle Welsh
freshman art & art history major

"I'd probably still dress the same as I do but with more Christmas colors."

Patrick Casey
freshman design major



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Transgender artists find safe space at Columbia

» **ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI**
ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER

“BRING YOUR OWN Body,” an art exhibit that opened Dec. 10, highlights transgender work through mixed media and educational materials from the notable Kinsey archives, among others.

The exhibit, located at The Glass Curtain Gallery, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., showcases work by transgender artists, along with various archives dating back to the 1940s relating to the transgender rights movement, according to Jeanne Vaccaro, who curated the exhibit with Stamatina Gregory.

“It was important for us to show contemporary artists who engage with archives and give a sense of artists who self-create and self-determine their presentation through artistic practice,” Vaccaro said.

Vaccaro and Gregory said the exhibit aims to accurately represent transgender people through contemporary art, which she said is not possible without showing the often degrading and violent representations of transgender people present in educational institutions that have documented their history.

Vaccaro, a postdoctoral fellow in gender studies at Indiana University and a scholar at IU’s Kinsey Institute, said the show uses the popular archives of Alfred Kinsey, a taxonomist, biologist and sexologist, to demonstrate the relationship of archival material to contemporary transgender artwork. Other educational archives in the show are from the University of Victoria in Canada and the Fales Collection from New York University in New York City.

Gregory, who is the associate dean of the School of Art at the Cooper Union in New York, said it was necessary to combine the archives with contemporary art.

“The capture of identity in the archive can be very violent, and it was really important for us to show these diagnostic and medicalized criteria through artistic practices and intervention,” Gregory said.

The show brings together various trans and gender nonconforming artists who work across media including film, painting, sculpture, clothing and newspaper prints, something Gregory said was critical to showcase.

“Bring Your Own Body” debuted at The Cooper Union Oct. 14 where it ran until Nov. 14. The



» EVAN BELL/CHRONICLE

Curators Jeanne Vaccaro and Stamatina Gregory attended the show’s opening on Dec. 10 at The Glass Curtain Gallery.

exhibition was not originally meant to travel, Gregory said, but Neysa Page-Lieberman, director of the Department of Exhibition & Performance Spaces at Columbia, discovered the exhibit at Cooper and wanted to bring it here.

“It is one of three shows we are doing this year that address gender inquiries and equity,” Page-Lieberman said.

“Bring Your Own Body” is the second exhibition of the series, Page-Lieberman said. She said the series started in the summer of 2015 with an inaugural alumni residency called Muse, featuring a collaborative photography and performance project by alumni Niki Grangruth and James Kinser focused largely on gender issues.

“Part of it was inspired by so much discourse happening on campus around pronoun usage,

and the right for our students to identify their gender however they want and express [it] however they want,” she said. “Having lots of conversations with students and seeing this exciting dialogue on campus made us look for exhibitions that address these topics.”

Vaccaro said it is important to show the work in an educational institution more than a commercial gallery because a lot of the

work comes from educational archives and speaks to young and active transgender communities.

Vaccaro added that the exhibit aims to bring to light more practical issues for trans or gender-queer students, like providing gender-neutral bathrooms on campus, and ensuring that trans and gender-nonconforming students have access to healthcare and are referred to by their chosen name in class.

“If we can create a sort of physical space that is a safe, welcoming and empowering environment for conversations and dialogue about the creativity and gender identity, then that’s something really important,” Vaccaro said. “The gallery is another classroom for these next three months.”

“Bring Your Own Body” is on display at the Glass Curtain Gallery until Feb. 13, 2016.

aparrella@chroniclemail.com



» EVAN BELL/CHRONICLE

The show features artists from around the country as well as Chicago-based transgender artist Mark Aguhar, who died of suicide in 2012.

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» LOU FOGLIA/CHRONICLE



NOT YOUR MOM'S TACOS

» ZOË EITEL
ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER

THESE AREN'T YOUR mom's taco shells, because they're my mom's. This is a dish my mom makes, and it's a family favorite. While I don't have a lot of time to cook, the shells are not hard to make

and can be cooked in less than a half hour if you boil the pasta and cook the meat at the same time.

The taco shells are jumbo pasta shells filled with a seasoned ground beef mixture, and they're so good you'll want to eat them with a spoon like my roommate tries to do while I'm still cooking.

When I finish, there is extra filling left, and my roommates claim the rest immediately and eat it with tortilla chips. I haven't met one person who doesn't like the shells.

As far as pricing goes—because I know that's the most important part—all the ingredients shouldn't cost more than \$20, as long as you

have a baking dish, but if you don't, it only costs a couple of dollars for two disposable ones.

One batch makes about 20 shells depending on the size of your pan, so you have plenty to share, or enough for a couple meals.

zeitel@chroniclemail.com

Directions:

1. Boil pasta shells, leaving them al dente for baking. Cool on counter when done.
2. Cook ground beef in skillet according to directions on taco seasoning packet.
3. Mix cream cheese with the cooked meat and let cool.
4. Stuff shells with meat mix and place in a baking pan with a layer of salsa on the bottom.
5. Pour remaining salsa over the shells and cover with foil.
6. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes.
7. Remove foil, add cheese to taste. Bake again until cheese is melted on top.

Ingredients:

- 1 box jumbo pasta shells
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 block cream cheese
- 1 packet taco seasoning
- 1 jar salsa
- 1 package Mexican cheese

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Watered-down characters sink 'In the Heart of the Sea'



AP PHOTO

"In the Heart of the Sea" hit U.S. theaters Dec. 11 after premiering in London and bringing in more than \$18 million for the non-U.S. opening weekend.

» **ETHAN STOCKING-ANDERSON**
FILM CRITIC

"IN THE HEART of the Sea" follows the grueling journey of the Essex, sunk by a whale thousands of miles off the Chilean coast. Director Ron Howard ("Apollo 13") compels the audience to wallow in the crew's tortuous hardships, stranded in open water for 90 days with the threats of starva-

tion and dehydration. The film tries to capture good old-fashioned American ingenuity, and it would have worked, too, had the script measured up to the brilliant visuals. Despite the abundance of ocean and sky, the story doesn't have room to breathe.

Adapted from the nonfiction book written in 2000 by Nathaniel Philbrick, the story of the Essex begins in 1820 when it set sail

from Nantucket Island. At the helm of the ship is George "Silver Spoon" Pollard (Benjamin Walker, "Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter") with the First Mate Owen "Totally Not Australian" Chase (Chris Hemsworth, "The Avengers") and cabin boy Thomas Nickerson (Brendan Gleeson, "The Guard"), who years later recounts the story to Moby-Dick author Herman Melville (Ben Whishaw, "Spectre").

No expense is spared as far as the visual effects are concerned, and the fast-paced, visceral editing is appropriate for the all-encompassing terror of towering waves out on the raging sea. Taking full advantage of stunning cinematography by Anthony Dod Mantle, Howard perfectly navigates the delicate subject matter of whaling. The tenacity of that industry is made to be a sight to behold, in the same way that one look at the mighty Hoover Dam commands awe, despite the negative environmental impacts that such herculean feats over nature tend to have.

The historical context demands heroes who are opportunistic and greedy, yet heroic and relatable. Hemsworth's character uses his talents to undertake activities now condemned in the 21st century, but he still comes off as admirable. The cunning versatility of the crew doesn't last, however. Humankind appears so majestic and powerful in one moment, only to become pitifully vulnerable the next. "Jaws" instilled fear of the creatures of the deep, but this film won't make viewers afraid of whales so much as it homes in on our fear of human frailty.

Unfortunately for such a glaringly human story, the characters and their dialogue often come off as disappointingly sterile and forced. The characters are so one-dimensional most only have one recognizable trait—usually in the form of an object they carry or their job on the ship. Even the tremendous potential of Gleeson is wasted on the old survivor-telling-war-stories cliché. Speaking of

which, we hardly learn anything that isn't spoken out loud, whether it comes right from the character's mouths or from Gleeson's narration. For example, we get to see one clash between Captain Pollard and First Mate Chase before narration tells us "they bickered like an old married couple," rather than allowing it to develop on screen. The audience is just expected to take Gleeson's word for it and move on. Unfortunately, all the raw emotion is buried beneath the Styrofoam-cutout characters and sluggish action-drama tropes.

"In the Heart of the Sea" has excellent imagery working for it, expertly placing you in the heat of the action, with the tortuous sun beating on you by day, and the waves suffocating you by night. Sure, that makes for a novel thrill ride, but abandon all hope for fully fleshed-out characters or interesting dialogue, because they have yet to surface.

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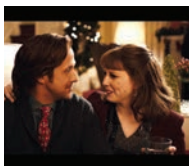


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top 5

our staff's
top 5 picks:

VIDEO & BLOG REVIEWS



Video: "SNL Santa Baby"

If you get serious about Santa Claus around the holidays, you'll want to join SNL's Doug (Ryan Gosling) and Gina (Vanessa Bayer) as they get totally turned on by the possibilities of meeting Santa. They make everyone at the neighborhood holiday party uncomfortable. Even Santa tries to make a run for it. Check them out, and have a laugh for the holidays.



Blog: "Farmville Freak"

The shame of being the annoying friend on Facebook that sends Farmville requests to everyone from close friends to acquaintances is over because there is now a blog to satisfy your online gaming obsessions. "Farmville Freak" is a space where Farmville fanatics can learn game hacks, get frequent game updates and connect with people who also share the love of the game.

REASONS I LOVE CHRISTMAS



» CHRIS SHUTTLESWORTH
MULTIMEDIA REPORTER

The only time a grown-up can be a kid:

I turned 21 this year, so I'm now an adult, but who cares? Christmas is still for everyone. Christmas is my favorite holiday because if you don't have any kids you can actually be one. You can jump from surprise in response to diamonds, luxury cars or even money for college books with no judgment. The only thing you can't do is sit on Santa's lap, unless you're married to him.

Watching movies like "Home Alone" all day:

This is the only time you'll see me watch a kid outsmart bad guys in order to protect his family and home. Yes, I'm talking about the movie "Home Alone." Hot chocolate, warm blankets and s'mores top it all.

Spending time with family:

One of the things I value most is my family, and Christmas is a time when I get to see them the most. This season is when my love for my family increases because I realize they are better than any accomplishment of the year.

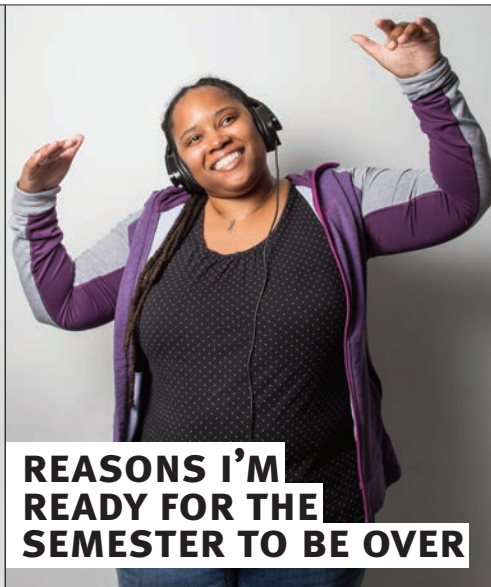
Celebrating Jesus:

During Christmas I celebrate the birth of Jesus and his love, peace and joy. I've learned his love is better than any of the material things I get on Christmas day.

Being on break from school:

I'm a working senior in college, and the best part of this season is that I get to take a break. From working through the week, balancing school and dealing with family life, a break is sometimes needed.

REASONS I'M READY FOR THE SEMESTER TO BE OVER



» JESSICA SCOTT
MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

"Editing Essentials":

I am so over this class. Sitting through two hours, two days a week listening to how verbals are wannabe verbs, how verbs hang out with nouns and how the subject may not be what you think it is has made me wish I majored in math—well not quite, but almost. Listen, I know all of this will help me become a better writer and land a job, but this class is too deep for me.

"Business Beat":

Let me start out by saying something good before it all goes downhill. Mark Skertic is the man to see if you are interested in learning about business. OK, now my soapbox begins—This class is a mixture of math, economics and journalism tied tightly with a little red bow you wish did not have your name on it. From stocks to bonds and derivatives to futures, everything starts to sound the same. Plain and simple, the point of the class is money rules the world.

Early bird:

The early bird catches the worm, but what if I don't want to catch the worm? What if I just want to catch some Zs?

Rest:

I am ready to give my body and brain a rest from the hustle and bustle of the semester and year. Don't get me wrong, I like college and learning, but I'm tired.

Parking:

I am sick of giving all of my money to these parking garages that charge you an arm, leg, kidney and kneecap.

FAVORITE CITIES I'VE VISITED



» SAIYNA BASHIR
MULTIMEDIA REPORTER

Istanbul:

Istanbul is a fusion of Europe and Asia and offers a unique culture because of its rich history. The city today reflects the many empires that once ruled the region, including the Roman and Ottoman empires.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia:

Malaysia is a great example of a secular Muslim country and Kuala Lumpur being its capital offers everything a metropolitan area does. The Petronas Twin Towers add great beauty to its growing skyline.

Dubai, United Arab Emirates:

Dubai is the perfect example of modern development and infrastructure. It is a city inspired by various others around the globe. The Arab culture is evident, but so are many other cultures that make Dubai culturally rich.

Lahore, Pakistan:

The city's architecture and monuments show that the city was once ruled by the Mughal Empire and later colonized by the British. It is the second largest city in Pakistan and is known for its art, culture and food.

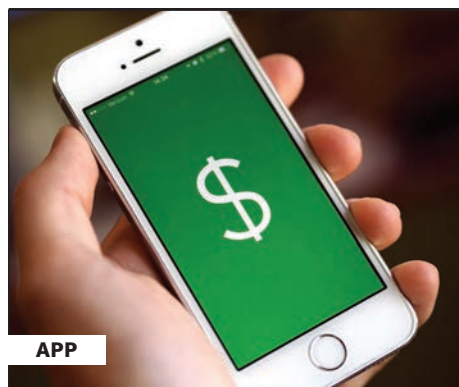
Tucson, Arizona:

I was in Tucson, Arizona earlier this year for a two-week internship at The New York Times Student Journalism Institute. The city is surrounded by mountain ranges across the Sonoran Desert. It is a college town hosting the University of Arizona, and offers great vintage shops, restaurants and bars.

reviews

ARTS & CULTURE

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APP

“SQUARE CASH” 😊

» **BRENDAN CHURCH**
MARKETING CONSULTANT

“Square Cash” is an awesome app that allows users to instantly transfer money between friends, regardless of whom they bank with. Whether you’re splitting a bar tab or a cab fee, for example, “Square Cash” makes transferring money easier than ever before. The best thing about the app is that it’s free. No more random ATM fees to pay your friends back!



SCREEN

“REASONS MORNINGS ARE THE ABSOLUTE WORST” 😊

» **ABBY SEITZ**
OPINIONS EDITOR

I’m not a morning person, so Matt Bellassai’s recent episode of “Whine About It” resonated with me. Bellassai raises typical concerns, such as how hard it is to leave a warm bed, but he also takes a much-appreciated stand against energetic morning people and their obnoxious ambition. He also raises valid scientific points, such as “The human body is not built for mornings.”



MUSIC

“I SAW YOUR FACE” BY STRANGE FACES 😐

» **ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI**
ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER

“I Saw Your Face” by Chicago band Strange Faces starts off sounding nostalgically similar to the “Friends” theme song. The song is off the band’s debut album *Stonerism*, which dropped Dec. 6. Mastered and mixed by Cadien James of *Twin Peaks*, the album sounds sloppy and grungy—the DIY style that is taking over the music scene. Sharing new voices with the world gets me bobbin’.



RANDOM

“FINE BY ME” BY CHRIS BROWN 😞

» **JESSICA SCOTT**
MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Chris Brown’s newest song, “Fine By Me,” is a mixture of pop, techno and R&B. I might make some Chris Brown fans mad, but I don’t care for this song, and the video is even worse. His lyrics leave something to be desired and the mixture of beats just doesn’t do it for me. As always, his lyrics lack creativity, umph, style and class. Other than that, it’s great.



APP

“MICROSOFT WORD” 😊

» **ANNIE JOHNSON**
MARKETING CONSULTANT

Didn’t get a chance to finish your paper in time? No worries, you can download the “Microsoft” app online where you could finish up your assignments right on your phone. Once you have downloaded the app, you can continue to type up your papers like you would on your computer. This app is fast and easy to use. You won’t be disappointed, and this app comes in handy especially when you’re on the go.



SCREEN

“WATCH DONALD TRUMP DODGE A BALD EAGLE” 😞

» **ABBY SEITZ**
OPINIONS EDITOR

This one-minute video’s title advertises the experience of watching an eagle attack America’s most embarrassing presidential candidate. Instead, the *TIME.com* video shows Donald Trump stroking his own hair, posing for photos and boasting about how brave he is for holding the eagle. The bird barely even lunges at him. If I wanted to hear Trump brag about himself for entertainment, I’d turn on Fox News.



MUSIC

“IN THE NIGHT” BY THE WEEKND 😊

» **MCKAYLA BRAID**
METRO REPORTER

This is one of the most upbeat songs I’ve heard from The Weeknd. It’s super catchy and makes me want to dance. This is a song that belongs on your party playlist. Even the music video is unique, and I actually sat and watched the entire thing because I was so interested. The intention was to listen to the song once to review it but instead I’ve been listening to it for the past 30 minutes on repeat—whoops.



RANDOM

“INSTANT CITY: LIFE AND DEATH IN KARACHI” 😊

» **SAIYNA BASHIR**
MULTIMEDIA REPORTER

Author Steve Inskeep embarks on a historical journey integrated with present day life in Karachi, Pakistan, a city that is highly complex and often misunderstood. “Instant City” is a great way to describe Karachi, a coastal city that grew over night. Inskeep introduces many influential characters that have the ability to “make or break” Karachi. These include philanthropists, politicians and journalists.



‘Columbia Core’ should retain college’s values

Unlike many colleges and universities, Columbia encourages students to begin taking classes required for their major during their first semester of attendance. Students also take a 42-hour Liberal Arts & Sciences core to supplement their major’s courses.

“It was important we establish a strong liberal arts core, and we have done that,” Senior Vice President and Provost Stan Wearden told The Chronicle in an Oct. 26 article. “Now it is important to take that next step. It is a step that a lot of institutions are taking to rethink the core and make sure the core is

sufficiently broad and covers the key aspects of being an educated adult.”

This semester, Columbia convened its Universal Learning Outcomes committee to deliver on the college’s Strategic Plan’s promise of a “21st century curriculum.” The committee was charged with identifying new learning outcomes and will complete its work on Dec. 15. These outcomes will be used by the Columbia Core committee to submit a proposal for a new core by May 27, 2016.

Many students are initially attracted to Columbia because the college encourages students to begin their major immediately,

rather than enrolling in an abundance of general education courses. Prospective students are told Columbia is a creative oasis in the world of higher education. Any new learning outcomes to be implemented should keep Columbia’s character in mind while expanding educational opportunities for students. It is essential that a new core does not intrude upon allowing freshmen to take classes in their major.

“Columbia’s intent is to educate students who will communicate creatively and shape the public’s perceptions of issues and events and who will author the culture of their times,” the college’s website states.

Students should also be able to explore their major and interests through expanded general education offerings. Science courses such as “Physics of Musical Instruments” and “Science Film Seminar” allow students to satisfy an LAS requirement through classes that are relevant to their major studies. Offering more classes that tie a liberal arts education into a student’s specific interests will provide a more meaningful education.

Opportunities for business and entrepreneurial education are also one of the most crucial ways to ensure student success after graduation. The focus group conducted in early November by the college revealed the importance of equipping students with professional demeanor and knowledge. The college’s LAS core currently requires an Oral Communication credit to prepare students with basic public speaking and presentation skills. Offering a similar class to teach students business essentials is just as important.

In addition, using modern technology and techniques should be a norm in all classes as should an appreciation of diversity and the chance to employ critical and creative thinking.

Creating a Columbia core to make the college more competitive with other colleges and universities is a worthy goal. Tailoring general education course offerings to be relevant to students’ careers, and implementing courses and modules that allow students to learn more about the world around them is necessary to realize it.

Mental health reform bill creates accountability

After mass shootings, political commentators are quick to point fingers at the possible causes of violence. Some blame graphic video games and lax gun laws. Others say America’s mental health system is responsible for letting those who need help most slip through the cracks. However, a new bipartisan bill seeks to reform the mental health system to prevent those with mental illness from turning violent or suicidal.

The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015 would grant accessibility to help for patients and their families in hopes of providing earlier treatment for mental illness. The bill was publicly supported by Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) as a solution to the regularity of mass shootings in America. Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA), the only licensed clinical psychologist in Congress, introduced

the bill June 4. Murphy introduced a similar bill in early 2013, following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary.

The bill has been approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee and will be voted on by the House in coming weeks. Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experience mental illness, but only 41 percent of those affected receive treatment, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Lack of accessibility to quality treatment can leave those who need it most with few options. An estimated 26 percent of homeless adults and 20 percent of state prisoners live with mental disorders, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. The bill would remedy this by allocating federal funding for increasing the availability of beds at psychiatric hospitals and the capacity of inpatient treatment facilities. A study by

the Treatment Advocacy Center revealed the availability of psychiatric hospital beds in 2010 was identical to availability in 1850 at 14 beds per 100,000 people.

While those living with mental illness may receive treatment plans, not all states hold the patient accountable for sticking to it. The bill would allow states to mandate court-ordered treatment such as therapy and medication to those with serious mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, according to the legislation. Similar procedures, known as assisted outpatient treatment programs, exist in 45 states to some degree, according to the Treatment Advocacy Center. The bill will create grants for states to utilize this practice more. While more legal accountability could result in more effective treatment, the legislation should only mandate court-ordered outpatient treatment when imminent danger is present.

The bill also enhances the role a family plays in the treatment and recovery of their loved ones by clarifying the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, which outlines patient privacy rights. Under HIPAA, physicians are

frequently limited in what they can tell families. However, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act outlines multiple instances in which families should be informed of a relative’s diagnosis, treatment plans, appointment scheduling, medication and medication-related instructions, according to the legislation. Providing families with more information about their relative’s diagnosis and treatment puts more support and accountability in place. This provision is critical to preventing tragedies and crises. However, some criticize this aspect of the bill because some families may not be understanding or supportive. Provisions should be put in place to ensure that revealing information only in necessary circumstances.

Millions of Americans struggle to receive the help necessary to function, recover and treat their mental illnesses. Creating increased accountability for treatment through court-ordered outpatient therapy and providing more information to families can ensure those struggling with mental illness have the opportunity to receive quality treatment.

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Did you catch a mistake, think we could have covered a story better or have strong beliefs about an issue that faces all of us here at Columbia?

Why not write a letter to the editor? At the bottom of Page 2, you’ll find a set of guidelines on how to do this. Let us hear from you. —**The Columbia Chronicle Editorial Board**



COMMENTARY

A reflection on my time at Columbia

» SAIYNA BASHIR
MULTIMEDIA REPORTER

The change in scenery from a developing country like Pakistan to the urban and glamorous city environment of a bustling Chicago was a roller coaster ride of emotions.

I remember receiving my acceptance letter from Columbia nearly two years ago. The letter was appreciative of my photojournalism experience covering the Sikh Baisakhi festival in Pakistan as part of my undergraduate thesis at Beaconhouse National University. I was the only female photographer who had to make my way through hordes of male pilgrims to capture the best composition and at the same time avoid being run over by a stampede.

I was teary-eyed the first time I saw downtown Chicago's glittering lights. The journey had been an exciting one, and I couldn't quite yet believe I was finally here.

One question I was asked all the time is, "You have moved all the way from Pakistan. How has that been for you?" My response was, "It's the perfect fit for me."

In the span of a few months, I realized Columbia not only prepares you

for the real world—it makes you a part of the real world from day one.

One of my first assignments was to shadow a working journalist for a day, which showed me what it's really like being a journalist in this city. I followed photojournalist Rob Hart who has been a great contact in the industry.

In the graduate program, we report on happenings at Chicago's City Hall, the Chicago Board of Education, the Chicago Board of Health and a multitude of other organizations and issues. The most exciting part of this reporting for me has been to write on deadline and read stories by other working journalists who were present at the same events.

In my first class, a police officer visited as a guest speaker and explained crime and homicide in the city. The program has helped me understand the dynamics of the city in a unique way that I would not have had otherwise.

Graduate school calls for caffeine overdoses, haphazard meals and quick shopping sprees in times of wardrobe

crises. Columbia's location in the heart of the city helps immeasurably. Being in Chicago's Loop is an experience in itself, with all the tourist hot spots within a stone's throw.

With the help of mentors and internship opportunities, I was able to work for The Chronicle and intern at the New York Times Student Journalism Institute and the Chicago Sun-Times. With time, I was able to make contacts with editors in and beyond Chicago and was published in Al Jazeera America and The Huffington Post. To be a journalist in Chicago is an incredible experience because it offers diversity and opportunities to network in the third-largest media market in the United States.

My experience as a graduate student at Columbia College and working in Chicago as a journalist has better equipped me to cover stories in Pakistan that I always wanted to cover and bring to the world's attention.

chronicle@chroniclemail.com

STUDENT POLL

What do you think a new core curriculum should include?

A course on financial stability, credit and learning how to invest and save money should be required.



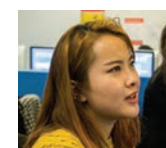
LAUREN CAMPBELL
senior public relations major



MITCH STOMNER
junior design major

Law—that's something I had to learn on my own. Copyright law is important in the arts.

Everyone needs to take literature because we can learn a lot about how to write and read and different cultures.



XIAO NAN ZHOU
senior fashion business major

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Responses to coverage of Story Week cancellation

'Story Week inspires'

Story Week has been replaced by a monthly author reading series, and some of my fellow students in the Creative Writing MFA Program think that's a good thing. I am not one of those students. Story Week is a big part of the reason I'm a student here at all, and more importantly, it's a big part of the reason I'm a writer so of course I'm not one of those students. Where I'm from, people don't become writers. It's unheard of. The closest I could come to this childhood dream of mine was majoring in English and teaching it to kids because that's practical, because that's possible. Even in college, as an undergrad, when I asked one of my instructors in the English Department of another

school how I might become a writer, I was told, "Marry someone who can pay the bills with a real job." But then there was Story Week. A dizzying array of inspiring and instructive readings, performances, presentations, panel discussions and publishing "bootcamps" that made the writing profession seem real, legitimate and accessible even to people where I'm from.

I went year after year, and one year, in 2010, when the festival's theme was "Genre Bending: The Faces of Fiction," I was so thrilled by the line-up of events that I started a blog just to have some place where I could write about it and put my eager, amateur thoughts out into the world, at least theoretically. Afterward, I sent an email to Randy Albers. This was his festival more than it was anyone else's.

He started it. He ran it. He introduced big writers to little ones, and vice versa. He opened his arms wide and gathered up all that was good and strong about the world of storytelling, and he brought it all to us in Chicago for one glorious, transcendent week every year, saying, "Look here, this is what's possible." And his reach was far. Salman Rushdie, Joyce Carol Oates, John Edgar Wideman, Irvine Welsh, Edwidge Danticat—he brought us the rock stars and, to me, he was a rock star, too. So I sent him an email with a link to my blog. And he wrote back like a person. He said kind, encouraging things, and I took the blog that I started just for the sake of covering Story Week and I used it to explore the literary community in Chicago, which I didn't even know existed.

Now I'm a student in the program that gave us Story Week, and, as such, I have gotten to work with a number of faculty members I discovered at the festival, some who have become personal heroes of mine. I have also come to see that Story Week is as important to us in here as it

was to me out there, that it's a part of the school culture, one of our sacred rituals. I worked for the festival as a grad assistant and learned firsthand that Story Week is not just a week. It's a year-long thing. The week itself is—or was—as exhausting as it was exhilarating, but, afterwards, there's Spring Break and then it's back to the festival grindstone: tallying up surveys, typing out attendee feedback, preparing data for grant proposals, discussing ways to make next year's seven days even better. There's a ton of planning, organizing, promoting and networking that goes into Story Week, and I got to help with all that. I got to meet agents, editors, reviewers, publishers and venue coordinators, not to mention incredibly talented, well-respected authors.

And these opportunities weren't just available to me. There have been other grad assistants throughout the years, as well as a small army of undergrad volunteers who got to work behind the scenes on this huge, powerful, beautiful thing.

SEE STORY WEEK, PAGE 32

STORY WEEK, FROM PAGE 31

And yet, Story Week has been replaced by a monthly author reading series, and some of my fellow students in the Creative Writing MFA Program think that's a good thing. Maybe they only got to see the most recent iteration of Story Week, the one that got minimal support from the college. Maybe they had trouble finding their place in it because a whirlwind phenomenon of its scope and magnitude can be extra hard to orchestrate when everything around you is shifting, as the case has been in our department for the last couple of years. Maybe they're not from Chicago, and they don't see what a loss this is to the city. Last year, we had four major free-and-open-to-the-public literary events each year: Printer's Row, Printers Ball, the Humanities Festival, and Story Week. And now we have three. Maybe they don't know that we're the live lit capital of the country, what Poets & Writers has said to be "quickly becoming the largest storytelling community in the world," with readings every night, and so a monthly author reading series is nice, but, really, only adding a teeny tiny bit more to what we've already got in spades. Or maybe, to them, smaller is better, a chance for us to close out the rest of the city and the world so that we, alone, could connect with literary giants, intimately. Maybe they think that's what being an MFA student should be all about. Maybe they didn't come from a place where people don't become writers, or, if they did, they never got the chance to see how Story Week is the thing that goes to those places and saves lives.

Alba Machado
Fiction MFA Candidate

Story Week is serious loss

What disappointing news! The end of Story Week, the institution that represented the best of Columbia and the most successful outreach program ever!

My South Loop friends and neighbors attended the stimulating readings and lectures. They thanked me, as a representative of Columbia, for the professional and educational presentations.

For many of the 19 years I would bring students from my Oral Expression classes to learn of literature and to observe speech techniques of writers, editors and moderators.

Story Week's termination is a serious loss to our college, our neighborhood and our city.

Mary Lou Wade
Adjunct professor, English Department

Let graduate students plan Story Week

I appreciated Professor Eric May's response. It was very illuminating in many ways. But it was also disheartening in others. I'm unsure if Professor May feels graduate students lack the skill set to handle sensitive materials or if he just holds an ideal vision of the unemployed graduate student solely engaging with his or her art for 2+ years.

If it's the former, graduate students did that and more in handling this semester's Reading Series, which ended earlier this month with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Adam Johnson (the Reading Series wasn't created to replace Story Week but its comparable offerings in Story Week's absence shouldn't be ignored). If it is the latter, I must say that is not always possible. Many graduate students have to work. We have bills to pay, families to create or to support, and also want to begin saving for our impending student loan debt.

I understand it is easy for faculty to forget that many graduate students have viable resumes with real work experience. Reading Professor May's response made me thankful for my high school

and undergraduate career building experiences, left me wondering if other students aren't getting the same and then made me sad at the thought that students may be missing out because professors underestimated them.

Truthfully, I've been thinking about Story Week a lot since that first article. Professor May's list of Story Week 15's many events did give me a greater sense of what we are losing. I now wish a better explanation for its cancellation could be provided.

I hope I've adequately dismantled the Lack of Manpower reason. The next is budget cuts. As both a broke college student and bride-to-be who is also planning her own wedding, I definitely know ways to stretch a budget.

A year-long festival featuring 12 reading events (our current series has 15), two panel discussions, one agent/editor conversation, and one undergraduate/graduate reading is doable. Guided by the Department Chair, Associate Chair, and Professor May, three graduate students receiving work-study could manage this. The bulk of the planning

could be accomplished from May to June, allowing the students to utilize their summer work-study allotment. The events, potential dates, budget, etc., could be crafted and booked then. To cut costs, most of the events could take place on campus. Another way to maximize the budget is to have faculty and students make up 50 percent of the participants: as moderators and/or authors in the reading and panelists. Big named authors are great but if we can't afford them, we can't afford them. There are plenty of notable authors among our own ranks. Our alumni authors, editors and connections are also great resources to continue to tap into.

Now that I know faculty are watching and engaged in this, I'm curious to see what happens—whether a merging can be had, student resources tapped into, and/or if Story Week resurrected on a cheaper budget. I'll be keeping my eye out for more from both The Chronicle and faculty.

Courtney Zellars
Fiction MFA Candidate

Alum not paid for Story Week

As one of the alumni quoted in "R.I.P Story Week," I need to address an issue raised by the letter to the editor from Courtney Zellars regarding Story Week (Nov. 3). Ms. Zellars states: "The alumni voices were OK but readers also must read their comments with more than a grain of salty skepticism—both alumni mentioned graduated over 20 years ago in 1993.

Both are also biased since they are affiliated with/paid by Story Week." While the former is true (I graduated in 1993 with a master's from the Fiction Writing program), I fail to see how that makes my voice as an alum any less significant. More importantly, while I have participated in Story Week events on several occasions, I was never paid for my contributions as Ms. Zellars wrongly assumes.

It was my honor to be a part of Story Week (pro bono), to see old friends and teachers, as well as meet students and learn about the exciting things they were doing in a program I loved and was proud to be a part of in my years at Columbia.

Arnie Bernstein
1993 Fiction Writing alumnus
Story Week participant

What did Mayor Rahm Emanuel know and when did he know it?

I am a student at Columbia Chicago and I read your [Dec. 7] article, "Mayor announces task force, residents propose ordinance." [The article] gives a lot of insight on what is currently going on between Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Police Department. As I read the article, I began to think, "How come [police] don't have cameras on their uniforms?" I did continue to read that six districts within Chicago would

receive them. Though what I truly believe is specifically following the Ferguson event—and especially the death of Eric Garner—police officers in all major cities should be required to have a camera on [their] uniform. It is kind of eerie the police officers in Chicago are behind [other cities] with having the cameras on their uniforms. As I read this article, I [also] began to think, "Why should we believe what Mayor Emanuel says when it is clear

that he knew about the death of Laquan McDonald around the time it actually happened, and most likely participated in the attempt to 'hide' the evidence?"

There are a lot of questions still unanswered about the death of Laquan McDonald and I deeply believe before we can start doing anything, those questions must be answered.

Ashley King
freshman design major



Following Mayor Rahm Emanuel's apology at City Hall on Dec. 9, several hundred protesters marched through the Loop, demanding the mayor's resignation.

» PHOTOS BY LOU FOGLIA/CHRONICLE



Protesters demand resignation of Emanuel, Alvarez

» MCKAYLA BRAID
METRO REPORTER

HOURS AFTER MAYOR Rahm Emanuel apologized Dec. 9 at City Hall for the death of Laquan McDonald, a teenager who was fatally shot 16 times by a Chicago police officer in 2014, protesters took to the streets calling for Emanuel and Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez to resign.

"Anita and Rahm must go," and "16 shots and a coverup," were some of the many chants protesters shouted as they marched through the South Loop.

When asked by the Chronicle what she would say to the mayor if she had the chance, Kara Rodriguez, a senior at DePaul University studying theater, said:

"We see right through you, we know you are a big part of the violence going on in the Chicago Police Department. If you really cared about accountability, if you really cared about ending a scandal, you would resign."

Protesters accused Emanuel and Alvarez of concealing the video depicting McDonald's death, which was not released until Nov. 24, more than a year after it happened.

"We're going to have a protest every day until Rahm and Anita resign," said Carolyn Ruff, a Lakeview resident at the protest.

On Dec. 1 Emanuel fired former Police

Superintendent Garry McCarthy. Former head of the Independent Police Review Authority Scott Ando also resigned Dec. 7 following the announcement of the Department of Justice's investigation of the CPD.

Later that day, Emanuel announced Sharon Fairley, a former federal prosecutor, as the new head of IPRA.

"I promise you I bring no agenda, other than the pursuit of integrity and transparency in the work that IPRA does. This is what our Chicago Police brethren deserve and what the City of Chicago citizens demand," Fairley said at the press conference.

Fairley said change is coming, but the mission of IPRA—which according to the organization's website is building trust in the police disciplinary process and the CPD as a whole through thorough, fair and timely investigations and increased transparency—will remain the same.

As for the investigation into the CPD, Emanuel said on Nov. 30 he welcomes the investigation and that it is in Chicago's best interest as a city.

At the press conference, a reporter asked Emanuel why he has not fired the other officers who falsified reports in the McDonald case to reestablish his credibility.

"You're asking on a day which I've brought in a new superintendent; we have a new head of IPRA, [and] there is an investigation right

now going on by the U.S. Attorney General on the event and all the parties involved as it relates to Laquan McDonald," Emanuel said. "When I'm given the chance and material, I will take action and make things right if they are wrong and hold people accountable."

Stephen Edwards, a national committee member of Socialist Alternative who attended the protest on Dec. 9, said the concealing of the video of the McDonald shooting is one of the many crimes that have been committed by the CPD.

"I think he's an absolute disaster," Edwards said when asked his opinion on Emanuel.

Edwards said he does not trust the Task Force on Police Accountability proposed by Emanuel on Dec. 1.

"I don't see any reason to think it would be independent," Edwards said.

Ruff also said she is not in favor of the task force because the members were chosen by Emanuel.

It is not clear whether Alvarez or Emanuel will resign, but Emanuel said he is taking responsibility and trying to fix problems and Alvarez had publicly said she will not resign.

"I'm taking responsibility for what happened and I take responsibility for fixing it," Emanuel said. "Part of every level of government is thinking not only about the future of the city of Chicago [but] doing the things necessary and making sure you're held accountable for the results, and so I will be judged by that, as I was for the last four years and the next four years to make sure that I do what's necessary."

mbraid@chroniclemail.com



Protesters rallied inside the Thompson Center for a brief moment on Dec. 9.

Sergie Attar: ‘Syrians face terror of Paris attacks every day’

» MCKAYLA BRAID
METRO REPORTER

THE CHICAGO COUNCIL on Global Affairs hosted a discussion on Syria and the global refugee crisis on Dec. 8 at which panelists said the country’s people live under perpetual siege.

The panel discussion took place at The Standard Club, 320 S. Plymouth Court, and included panelists Lina Sergie Attar, vice president of the Chicago chapter of the Syrian American Council; Gregory Maniatis, senior advisor to Peter Sutherland, the UN Special Representative for Migration; Robert Pape, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago who specializes in international security affairs; and moderator Cameron Hudson, director of the Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

“I wanted to remind everybody that for the past four-and-a-half years, every single day in Syria, Syrians face the same terror the people of Paris faced during the attack,” Sergie Attar said. “This happens every day inside Syria and that is what Syrians are fleeing—they are fleeing the bombs, they are fleeing the beheadings, they are fleeing terrorism.”

Sergie Attar’s parents are doctors from Syria, and she has been going back to the border to help refugees.

She said when she works with children, they turn off the news and focus on making the future better through education.

“All we see in the world as Syrians and Syrian Americans is a complete and utter failure of the international community,” Sergie Attar said.

She said when she first started revisiting Syria in 2012, people would ask her why no one was

helping them, but they do not ask that question anymore.

“They’ve given up on the world helping them,” Sergie Attar said.

Maniatis said a refugee is someone who can prove a credible fear of persecution. If that fear can be proven, the person can seek refuge in another country and not be sent back to where they are fleeing from, he said.

Maniatis said the only issue is the way the term is interpreted. He said Europe can make the argument that refugees do not need to go further than Turkey because it is safe, and after they leave Turkey, they are considered immigrants.

Sergie Attar said there is a misconception that people think all of the refugees are living in camps. Only a fraction are living there, and the rest of the people are living in storefronts and unfinished homes, she said.

She added that this is why there has been an increase of refugees paying thousands of dollars and risking their lives to be smuggled out of Syria.

Pape cited the issue of ISIS, whose videos portray America as anti-Muslim.



“They’re painting a vision of America that hates Muslims and they quote rhetoric from America,” Pape said.

He said the portrayal of an anti-Muslim America helps them recruit and also terrifies Muslims living in America.

“[A total of] 790,000 refugees [have been] accepted into the country since 9/11. Three have been linked to terrorist plots [but] none of them were able to affect terrorist plots. It might happen, there might be connections in the future between terrorist acts here or in Europe and refugees. That is absolutely no reason to reject the other 789,997 who came in. That’s just crazy,” Maniatis said.

Sergie Attar said that it would be

difficult for people to believe that the children she works with in Syria are refugees.

She spoke about a boy in the 10th grade who taught himself five coding languages and wants to be a computer engineer.

Sergie Attar added that one girl was interviewed by a man from CNN, and after speaking to her for 15–20 minutes, he said she reminded him exactly of Malala Yousafzai, the youngest person to win a Nobel peace prize.

“We hope the world will welcome them into their lives as people who have a very bright future, and can brighten all of our futures together,” Sergie Attar said.

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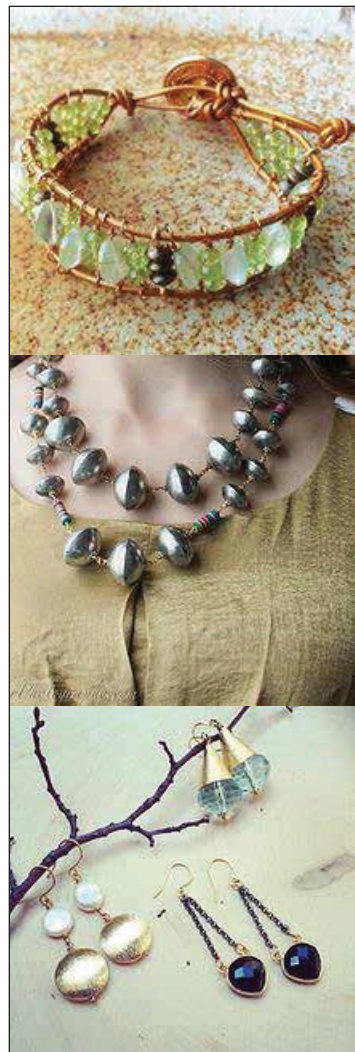
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Residents perturbed about Logan Square developments

» **GRETCHEN STERBA**
METRO REPORTER

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW developments on the 2200 block of Milwaukee Avenue in Logan Square is raising concerns among residents regarding affordable housing availability and gentrification in the neighborhood, according to the office of Alderman Proco Joe Moreno (1st Ward) and Logan Square residents.

One development, a dual-towered rental complex located at 2293 N. Milwaukee Ave. broke ground in November and will include two 11- and 12-story buildings featuring more than 200 apartments, said Raymond Valadez, chief of staff to Moreno.

A second development, the “L” building, began construction in April near the towers at 2211 N. Milwaukee Ave. It is going to

feature 120 new luxury units with monthly rent starting at \$1,500 for two bedrooms, while rents at the dual-towers will start at \$1,250 for a studio apartment and \$2,500 for two bedrooms.

The “L” project is scheduled to be completed by Summer 2016 while the dual towers project is set to be finished at the end of 2016.

While Logan Square residents have expressed concerns that the developments will further gentrify the neighborhood, Moreno’s office claims the developments will foster more diversity.

“We think these new developments along Milwaukee Avenue are going to be an overall positive for the community,” Valadez said.

Valadez said the developments would be constructed on lots that have been vacant since the 2008 financial collapse, and the neighborhood has received many

proposals for developments on Milwaukee Avenue since 2013.

“It’s going to help repopulate the community,” Valadez said. “It’s going to bring in new people and new energy, especially to those commercial streets that have been underdeveloped and vacant for many years.”

Andrew Schneider, president of Logan Square Preservation, a nonprofit organization that has opposed almost all projects

proposed for Logan Square that reduce the number of residential units, said he aims to ensure the projects can complement the existing community by bringing in a diverse group.

Schneider said Milwaukee Avenue houses many vintage buildings that feature affordable housing. The new developments not only clash with the historic architecture, but also threaten their survival, he said.



A Twin Towers project, located at 2211 N. Milwaukee Ave., is shooting for completion by the end of 2016.

Schneider said the lots for the developments were deliberately kept vacant to encourage dense upzonings, the practice of changing an area usually from a residential use to a commercial one.

“The owners of property sometimes tear down a building and they just wait,” Schneider said. “They allow it to become light of the property tax bill [that] goes down until the community’s sick of it.”

Scott Wilson, a graduate student instructor for Columbia’s Writing and Rhetoric classes who has lived in Logan Square since 2011, said he thinks the problem is that developers build huge, expensive buildings. They tend to drive up the rent for the area around it, which has no rent control.

“What’s going to happen is the same thing that happened to Wicker Park. As soon as these luxury buildings came in, the rent just went up for the whole area and it completely pushed out everybody who couldn’t afford it,” Wilson said.

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Kendria Harris

OCCUPATION: Spoken word artist/mentor
NEIGHBORHOOD: South Shore

**{NOTABLE
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» DOMINIQUE JACKSON
METRO REPORTER

Kendria Harris, whose performance name is K-Love, is a Chicago poet and mentor to youth on the South Side.

From an early age, Harris knew she had a passion for teaching children. In middle school, she took the younger children in her neighborhood to the library and taught them what she was learning in school at the time.

In 2003, Harris, who was then 21, became interested in spoken word poetry after she performed at an open mic night at Giovanni's Pizzeria in Dolton, Illinois, and she said the crowd's positive response was "life changing."

Harris worked as a writing instructor for middle school students for about five years before she launched her organization, LYRIC Mentoring, which stands for Let Your Rhymes Inspire Creativity. It was established in 2008 by Harris and Teh'Ray Hale, also known as Phenom, because of their love for poetry and mentoring.

Harris has performed throughout the Midwest and in places like New Orleans, St. Louis, New York, Atlanta, Ohio and Philadelphia.

Currently, Harris manages The Princess Project, an 8–10 week course teaching young girls ages 6–11 about self-love and exposing them to royals of African descent.

The girls in the program learn about 12 African queens including Nefertiti, Nzinga and Cleopatra.

The project culminates in a photo shoot in which the girls recreate photos of the African queens they have learned about.

LYRIC hosts a teen open mic night every Tuesday at 119 E. Garfield Blvd. in Chicago, starting at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free.

The Chronicle sat down with Harris to talk about her path to success, poetry and mentoring young people.

THE CHRONICLE: What themes are present in your spoken word poetry?

KENDRIA HARRIS: If my poetry could go in a library, it would go under the self-help book section. Most of my poems are about the struggle of dealing with ourselves before we can deal with anybody else. I attempt to be vulnerable and open with my poetry so that something that I say makes someone more comfortable with exposing their flaws and working through them.

Why is mentoring a powerful tool to you?

It's powerful for the mentor because it's almost like getting a second chance at life. All the mistakes you made in life—you can't go back and correct them, but you can save someone from falling into the same hole you did.

How do you define success?

Success is reaching one's personal goal of contentment. It all depends on what you consider to be successful. Some people in my family consider having a house or car to be successful, or having a degree, but for myself, I really feel like I have fulfilled my purpose for the majority of my life. I have been able to live, inspire and motivate. I am already successful. I'm rich in love. I have pleased God with my works.

How can people get involved in your organization?

I tell my kids that I'm like an encyclopedia mentor. I'm a great

reference book full of knowledge, wisdom, answers and help, but the book [doesn't] fall off the shelf and hit you on the head anymore. [My advice] is for those who reach out for it, if you're looking for it, grab it and I will have it for you. If someone is interested in working with children, [they] have to genuinely care. If you don't have the empathy to do this work, I suggest you do something else. [To mentor,] you have to be there, be available and be transparent.

How can people use poetry in a therapeutic way?

Your pen and your paper are really the only places you can go to say whatever you like. Everywhere else, children have so many restrictions to what they can say and when they can say it. Sometimes we just need to say what is on our heart, we need to say it out loud so we can hear it, and we need to read it. I think poetry gives us that freedom. A lot of times my feelings were suppressed because I didn't know where to put them.

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Black police officers talk trust to students



Students and community members listened to Chicago police officer Yasmia Dunn speak about her relationship with residents at a Dec. 9 forum at 33 E. Congress Parkway.

when asking tough questions of officers.

"I thought there would be more hatred because of the things going on in Chicago," she said. "It gave a perspective of them as humans and the understanding that they too have fears."

CPD officers shared their sides of stories that often upset or offend residents. Officer David Anderson, a 9-year CPD veteran, described pulling over a driver because his vehicle matched a description police were searching for. The description said the man was armed, so he approached the car with his gun drawn. Anderson said he felt confused when the man asked if he was being pulled over because of his skin color.

He asked attendees to consider that they may not always know

Police," but discussions focused more on building trust between police and residents, rather than police officers' use of force.

Seven law enforcement officers and nearly 40 others attended the forum, which Columbia's Black Student Union President Brooke Thomas said was very successful. Thomas is a senior business & entrepreneurship major.

Thomas began by asking attendees to "listen to understand and not to respond." Everyone respected that request, remaining quiet and friendly, even

why an officer interacts with them and encouraged people to communicate with officers and ask for those explanations if they feel bothered by police.

Shakayla Eaddy, a freshman fashion studies major, asked Anderson why he had his gun drawn before any confrontation with the man. Hamilton responded by saying officers are often shot by seated passengers. He explained that it's difficult for officers to know what passengers will do.

Eaddy said she understands his reasoning, but does not find it fair.

"I'm satisfied with the answer but I don't agree with it," she said.

Carla Kupe-Arion, an attorney for the Chicago office of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, said she shares the communities pain.

"It's a difficult time for me as a black person in the law department," Kupe-Arion said. "Yes, we need law enforcement, but law enforcement needs to be right and do right."

Several audience members shared frustrations that

complaints against officers seem to go unheard by the department. Kupe-Arion urged them to continue filing complaints, but also to make sure the process is completed.

"The majority of the complaints I see have been closed because the person who filed the complaint stopped showing up," she told them.

Another officer, Yasmia Dunn, also encouraged residents to file complaints when they feel harassed by officers.

"You can win that battle," Dunn said. "You don't have to agree to being mistreated."

Officer Janelle Hamilton, who works in the department's narcotics division, said she was glad to hear residents' concerns and thought the event went well.

"The most important part is taking what they had to say back to our district and our fellow police officers," she said. "It's a great start. We both know work still has to be done."

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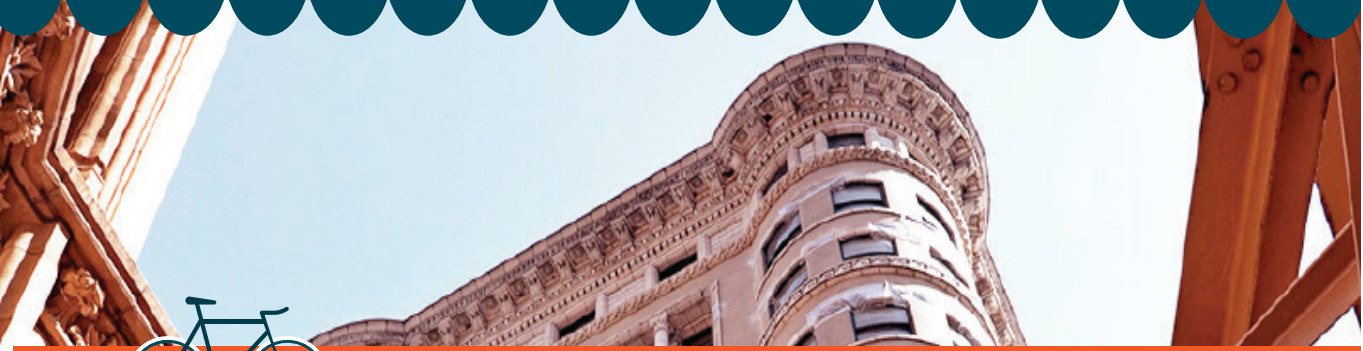
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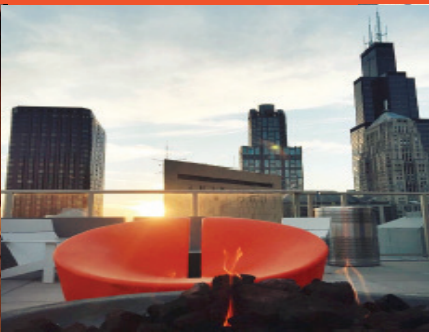


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